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ABSTRACT

This guide outlines 10 basic steps for policymakers and practitioners interested in creating Second Chance Homes in their areas. Second Chance Homes provide stable, nurturing environments for teen families with access to child care, education, job training, counseling, and advice on parenting and life skills. The guide is based on interviews with program administrators in the five states with established Second Chance Home networks, on surveys of 36 Second Chance Home providers nationwide, and on interviews with current and former Second Chance Home residents. The chapters are: "What Are Second Chance Homes?: 'I Want the Best for My Daughter.' Katherine's Story"; "Step One: Defining Goals for Second Chance Homes. Putting the Pieces Back Together: Emerline's Story"; "Step Two: Recognizing Your Community's Needs"; "Step Three: Deciding Which Families To Serve. Serving Dads Too: 22 Park Avenue, Portland, Maine"; "Step Four (for Providers): Structuring Your Program. A Second Chance for Teen Moms in Foster Care: The Florence Crittenden Agency, Knoxville, Tennessee"; "Step Five (for Policymakers): Determining the State's Role. A Safe Haven: Jessica's Story and The Comprehensive Model: The Massachusetts Teen Living Program"; "Step Six: Getting Teen Parents in the Door. A Continuum of Care: Rhode Island's New Opportunity Homes"; "Step Seven: Selecting the Services You Will Provide. A State Responds to Welfare Reform: The Nevada Second Chance Homes Program"; "Step Eight: Finding Allies in Your Community. The First Statewide Network: New Mexico's Teen Parent Residence Program"; "Step Nine: Estimating Costs. The Power of One: The Wayne County Supportive Housing Program"; and "Step Ten: Evaluating Your Success. A Long Term Investment in the Future: Jaime's Story." Two appendixes present survey respondents and a sample assessment form for potential Second Home residents. (SM)

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Starting a Second Chance Home: *A Guide for Policymakers and Practitioners*

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What are Second Chance Homes?

People who work with adolescent mothers know that most of these young women have a common set of needs:

- Teen mothers need structure and supervision. Even though they are parents, many of these young women have not yet acquired the cognitive or emotional skills necessary to live on their own.

- Teen mothers need to learn social and workplace skills. Many adolescent mothers are ill equipped to deal with a world beyond the families and neighborhoods where they grew up. They need help learning how to interact effectively in an adult world.

- Teen mothers need help finishing school. Most teen mothers have histories of school failure. Many pregnant teens drop out before their children are born; the rest find it difficult to stay in school once their children are born.

- Teen mothers need help raising children. Often isolated from sources of emotional and financial support, these young parents need guidance and support to help them learn to be good parents.

- Teen mothers need help recovering from histories of abuse or neglect. Without interventions to help teen mothers heal from these experiences, they may endanger their own children by continuing the cycles of abuse and neglect.

- Teen mothers need help breaking out of the cycle of dependence. Many teen mothers come from families with long histories of welfare dependence. Without intervention, they are likely to become long-term welfare recipients themselves.

- Some teen mothers need financial support. Many teen mothers can depend on their babies' fathers, their parents, or extended family members for financial and emotional support. Many others, however, have no resources to support their children.

- Some teen mothers need a safe place to raise their children. Many teen mothers come from homes where violence and substance abuse are common. Others come from homes where there is no room for a mother and her baby. Without alternatives, these young women can end up separated from their children in the foster care system, in homeless shelters, or on the streets.

Second Chance Homes provide stable, nurturing environments for teen families with no place else to go. Set in either large shared single-family homes or in clusters of apartments, these residential facilities provide teen mothers with the support they need to become self-sufficient and learn to be good parents.

Second Chance Homes offer access to child care, education, job training, counseling, and advice on parenting and life skills. Trained, supportive staff members help residents

obtain social services, care for their children, and plan for the future. Many of these services could be offered to teen parents living in other settings. But Second Chance Homes are unique in offering all of these services in one place – a structured, safe, nurturing home environment for teenage girls and their babies.

Churches and nonprofits scattered across the country have been operating group homes for teen mothers for years. Since the passage of federal welfare reform in 1996, a number of states have joined the effort. Using federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds or state funds, states are supporting efforts by community-based and faith-based organizations to create more homes for these vulnerable young families.

Massachusetts and New Mexico were among the first states to provide state funding, technical assistance, and oversight to Second Chance Homes. In 1999, statewide Second Chance Home programs opened in Texas, Rhode Island, and Nevada. In 2000, Georgia became the sixth state to launch a statewide Second Chance Homes program. Many cities—including communities in Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Connecticut, Oregon, Washington, and Vermont—have opened homes as well.

State-run Second Chance Home programs are still fairly new, but already there are signs of success. Second Chance Homes not only keep adolescents and their babies safe in the short term, but they also show promise in helping these fragile families in the longer term. In New Mexico, less than one percent of Second Chance Home residents have become pregnant again while living in the homes. In Massachusetts, more than half the teens who left the program in 1999 have made measurable progress in school, learned to manage personal budgets, brought their children's immunizations up to date, mastered appropriate parenting techniques, and recognized how to avoid repeat pregnancies.

This guide outlines 10 basic steps for policymakers and practitioners interested in creating Second Chance Homes in their states or communities. The guide includes advice about setting goals, deciding which families to serve, designing program models, qualifying for government funding, and engaging communities. It also looks at such issues as custody, services, costs, and evaluation.

The advice in this guide is based on insights gathered in detailed interviews with program administrators in the five states with established Second Chance Home networks, as well as from 36 Second Chance Home providers nationwide who completed a survey about their programs in the summer of 2000. We also interviewed a number of current and former Second Chance Home residents for their opinions about what makes a successful Second Chance Home.

"I Want the Best for My Daughter:" Katherine's Story

Katherine was glad to move into a Second Chance Home in early 2000. Her father died when she was 11, leaving her mother a single parent with three children. When Katherine had a baby of her own at age 15, the crowded conditions at home created difficulties for everyone. Then her school counselor told her about a local Second Chance Home in Worcester, Massachusetts. Katherine says she decided to enter the program with her daughter Sachelle "because I wanted to be on my own. I wanted to do something for me and my daughter. I didn't want to be on the street with her."

Now, at age 18, Katherine looks back on her experience with new insights. And she acknowledges that living in a Second Chance Home provided more than a roof over her head. "I learned a lot from this program," she says. "Before, I hated rules and didn't think I could take responsibility. But here, it is all about responsibility and rules. So I give the program credit. They teach you to be on your own, be responsible, take care of your child, and pay your bills." Her relationship with her mother has improved as well. Katherine beams when she says, "My mom and I get along great now because we're not both trying to be parents under the same roof."

Katherine's least favorite aspect of the program is the turnover among residents. Many of the young mothers who enter the program leave within a short time because they can't handle the rules or accept the consequences of their actions. And, as program directors note, each young family that joins the household changes the group dynamic and requires all residents to adjust.

The secret to living in a Second Chance Home, says Katherine, is "knowing what you want to get out of it." In her case, it means completing her education and finding housing of her own. She is attending the local community college full time and studying to become a medical secretary. Katherine is waiting for subsidized housing, but is glad to have a home in the meantime. "I want the best for my daughter," she says, "That's why I stay."

Step One
Defining Goals for Second Chance Homes

A stay in a Second Chance Home is not going to solve every problem in a teen mother's life—particularly when she brings with her years of abuse, neglect, poverty, and school failure. It's important to be realistic about what Second Chance Homes can accomplish, both in the short and long term. For many teen parents, little victories—such as finding child care or returning to school—can be huge triumphs.

As Donna Anderson, a Second Chance Home provider, wrote in *Hope House of Savannah: An Ethnographic Study*: "Four months of intervention at Hope House, as intense as it may be, cannot undo 17 years of low self-esteem, poor parenting by dysfunctional families, or effects of structural barriers such as environmental toxins in substandard housing. At best it can initiate change or continue change started by another…Places like Hope House are providing their customers with another piece of the road map, or perhaps the first road map they have ever seen. The staff are teaching them how to read the map and some other survival skills they will need along the way."

Second Chance Homes can set many types of goals: for teen parents, their children, and for programs. Program goals may also depend on available funding. Some programs may only be able to provide shelter while others may offer many services on site. Each state program or individual home must determine its single most important, overarching goal—its main reason for existence—and organize all other aims around this central purpose.

Proponents of Second Chance Homes must make sure that all of the partners involved in creating the homes—funders, state and local social services agencies, community partners, and teens themselves—understand and support the primary goal. How the homes' goals are defined at the outset will shape the programs' designs and define what success means to policymakers and the public.

In Massachusetts, for example, the primary goal for the state's Second Chance Homes network is safety. When the state required teens to live with parents or other suitable adults as a condition of receiving welfare benefits in 1995, policymakers worried that forcing teens to live at home would force them to remain in unsafe, unstable situations or drive them out of the welfare system.

Therefore, Massachusetts officials contracted with private agencies to create 21 Second Chance Homes to provide safe, stable housing for teens mothers and their children. The new Teen Living Program was placed under the jurisdiction of the state's child protective services agency. State officials also decided to designate "emergency beds," which would be available for teen mothers who needed safe havens on short notice. Finally, the state designated one Second Chance Home as a safe house for domestic violence victims.

Five years later, safety remains the primary goal of the Massachusetts program. Its administrators stress that their success in achieving this goal alone justifies the program's $5 million annual expense.

In New Mexico, education is the primary goal. The state began its support for a network of Teen Parent Residences in 1990, after schools and communities reported that teen mothers were dropping out of school because they lacked stable housing. Thus, New Mexico concentrates on providing stable housing and helping young women prevent repeat pregnancies so that they can complete high school—and even go on to college.

Rhode Island's goal is the most ambitious: "personal and economic self sufficiency" for teens. The state's Second Chance Homes network, which opened in 1999, focuses heavily on preparing teens for independent living. Residents of the state's New Opportunity Homes progress through a tiered system of care. Residents first spend six months living in group homes, then move to clusters of shared apartments, and finally move into apartments of their own.

States may choose to emphasize other goals, such as preventing repeat pregnancies, protecting and nurturing the children of teen mothers, reunifying and stabilizing families, building teen parents' self-esteem, offering alternatives to abortion, providing refuge from domestic violence, and keeping mothers in foster care from being separated from their children.

That being said, programs should set some short- and long-term goals for Second Chance Homes—and the teens they serve—to achieve. "Have very clearly defined outcomes and objectives," advises Marcella Gladney Lee, executive director of Mother's Refuge in Independence, Missouri. "Have a very focused mission and vision statement."

The following chart details suggested goals for Second Chance Home programs that may help you set realistic goals and priorities.

Suggested Goals for Programs

Short-Term Goals	Long-Term Goals
Make homes nurturing so teens are willing to enter and stay in programs.	Persuade teens to stay in programs until they are ready to live on their own, return to their families, or find stable housing.
Ensure that teen parents are safe from domestic violence or substance abuse.	Ensure that teens know how to handle future domestic violence or substance abuse situations.
Meet residents' basic needs: shelter, nutrition, health care, and clothing.	Ensure that teens leaving programs receive continuing economic, housing, or emotional support if needed.
Ensure that teens' children are not abused or neglected.	Decrease future instances of abuse and neglect.
Teach teens to nurture their children and promote their healthy development.	Ensure that teens have acquired good parenting techniques and will practice them in the future.
Ensure that children receive quality child care and services for any emotional problems, developmental delays, or physical disabilities.	Ensure that children are school-ready by reducing developmental delays, behavioral problems, and poor health.
Get teens to attend school or job training.	Ensure that teens graduate from high school or GED programs; help teens find part- or full-time jobs.
Prepare teens to manage daily tasks: budgeting, planning meals, obtaining social services, resisting pressure to use drugs and alcohol, finding housing, developing strategies to adapt to life's challenges.	Ensure that teens are able demonstrate basic life management skills.
Help teens avoid repeat pregnancies while they are in residence.	Help teens recognize the importance of delaying future pregnancies until they can support the children they already have and they have attained other life goals.
Conduct outreach to fathers and extended families when appropriate.	If possible and beneficial, fully integrate extended families and fathers into children's lives.
Help teens improve their self-esteem and sense of confidence about the future.	Ensure that teens have an adequate support system of family and peers so that they can use their newfound confidence to succeed in their goals.

Regardless of your program's goals, one fact remains true for all Second Chance Homes: Time is your best ally. The longer you can allow or encourage a teen parent to stay in your home, the more likely that both the program's and the teen's goals will be met.

Putting the Pieces Back Together: Emerline's Story

Emerline lived in a home headed by her grandmother most of her life, but when her grandmother died, the family broke up. "She was the glue that held it all together," Emerline remembers. And as far as the rest of her family was concerned, the 17 year-old was on her own.

Still, Emerline knew the value of an education. She worked two jobs to pay her own tuition at a private high school where she earned straight As and was elected president of the National Honor Society. When she could no longer afford tuition, she decided to take a year off to work and save money.

At first, Emerline moved in with her 20-year-old fiancé and his mother. When all three were evicted a few months later, Emerline and her boyfriend moved from house to house, eventually living out of their car. That's when she found out she was pregnant.

Emerline was overwhelmed. She soon lost her job as a teacher's assistant because school officials felt her pregnancy would set a bad example for the children. At age 18, five months pregnant and still living in a car, she applied for welfare benefits. According to state welfare requirements, Emerline would not be eligible for TANF benefits until her third trimester; she left with food stamps in her hand. Rather than leave her fiancé to go to a homeless shelter, Emerline lived another month in the car. A few days before her third trimester began, she went to live in a Second Chance Home.

"I didn't want to come," Emerline claims, because the Second Chance Home was an hour away from her fiancé. "But he and I both agreed it was the best thing for the baby." After two months, she reports that the program had proven to be a better experience than she expected, and that she appreciates the staff being so helpful. While she understands the reason for a curfew, she wishes that the program could allow more independence for residents over 18.

"Since coming here I'm back in school and doing great," she says, noting that in January 2001, she is planning to enter a two-year program at the local community college to become certified as an ultrasound radiology technician. She is mentoring other students in her GED class, and she's been accepted into a transitional housing program where she and her fiancé can live together after the baby is born. Her family is coming back into her life now and she no longer feels overwhelmed. "I had the pieces there, but [this place] helped me put it all together," she says. "I appreciate it so much."

Step Two
Recognizing Your Community's Needs

Vickie Siebenmorgen, executive director of Florence Crittenton Services in Little Rock, Arkansas, has a simple piece of advice for anyone who wants to establish a Second Chance Home: "Check whether the community you plan to serve needs your services." Before investing time, energy, and emotion in opening a Second Chance Home, make sure that your community needs one and learn more about the teens you plan to serve.

A good needs assessment will provide the basis for building a strong program. The assessment will help project the number of beds you might need, the types of services residents will need, and the available resources. A needs assessment can also help you make your case to policymakers and potential donors. Some questions you may want to ask include:

How large is the potential service population in your target service area?

- ❑ How many pregnant and parenting teens live in the target service area (state, county, city, neighborhood)?
- ❑ Where do these teens live? How many live in rural or isolated areas? How do teen birth rates compare in different communities or areas of the state?
- ❑ How many parenting teens in the community do not currently live with parents or other responsible adults? Where are they living?
- ❑ How many teen parents are living in families with histories of abuse, neglect, or substance abuse?
- ❑ How many parenting teens receive regular financial or parenting support from the fathers of their babies?
- ❑ How many parenting teens enter homeless shelters each year? How many teens must homeless shelters turn away because of age requirements or other regulations?
- ❑ How many parenting teens are in the child protective services or juvenile justice systems?
- ❑ How many parenting teens apply for TANF each year? How many are sanctioned or denied, or choose not to go on welfare because they do not meet the live-at-home requirement?
- ❑ Would teens involved in the foster care, the juvenile justice, and/or the TANF system volunteer to live in Second Chance Homes if such facilities were available?
- ❑ Would parenting teens in school and community-based teen parenting programs choose to live in Second Chance Homes if such facilities were available?
- ❑ How many potential residents of Second Chance Homes have more than one child?
- ❑ How many potential residents of Second Chance Homes are under age 15? How many are ages 15-17? How many are ages 18-19?

What services do your community's parenting teens need?

- ❑ How many teen parents in need of Second Chance Homes have medically needy children?
- ❑ How many parenting teens are not attending school or test significantly below grade level?

- How many have limited knowledge of English or have other cultural or linguistic needs?
- How many have histories of physical or sexual abuse?
- How many would need to live in a secure location because of domestic violence?
- How many have histories of substance abuse?
- How many have mental or physical disabilities? How many have histories of mental illness?
- How many have children in state custody?

What options and requirements do you have for a Second Chance Home facility?

- Is there a facility available that could serve as a Second Chance Home—for example, a large family home, an apartment building, a former school, a convent, or a hospital?
- Is the facility safe for young children? Is it free of lead paint and asbestos?
- Is there a neighborhood that would be particularly well suited for a Second Chance Home because of proximity to schools, social services, medical services, child care, or public transportation? Does this neighborhood have appropriate housing available?
- Do zoning regulations permit congregate care facilities in this neighborhood?
- Will your neighbors oppose locating a congregate care facility in this area?

What are your community's existing resources for Second Chance Homes?

- Based on the information you've gathered about teen parents in your target service area, which communities need Second Chance Homes right away?
- Do Second Chance Homes already operate in the target service area? Are they fully occupied? Do they have waiting lists?
- Are there licensed residential child-care or transitional-living facilities with excess capacity that could begin serving teen families right away?
- Are there foster care options that allow teen parents to remain with their children?
- Are there areas of the state where teens need Second Chance Homes, but no organization is willing or able to operate one?
- What are the current policies and programs of state and local agencies to provide housing and support services to teen parents?
- What is the current capacity of state and local agencies to provide services for teen parents? Can these agencies handle an increase in their caseloads? Will they be able to provide funding, technical assistance, and referrals?

What are the potential resources for Second Chance Homes?

- Which transitional-living facilities, homeless and battered women's shelters, residential child-care facilities, and other organizations are interested in expanding to serve teen families? How much time would they need to acquire, construct, rehabilitate, or expand facilities?
- Are there organizations that would like to open Second Chance Homes, but do not currently have the capital to acquire, construct, or rehabilitate a facility?
- What supportive services already exist for parenting teens? Can these services be coordinated with Second Chance Homes?
- Are there any universities or businesses that are likely to join as partners?

Getting answers to these questions won't be easy, but there are a number of resources to use as you begin your needs assessment. You can examine U.S. Census data; gather existing state data from the departments of education, public health, welfare, and child protective services; survey teen mothers who participate in social services in the community; survey organizations working with teen mothers; and ask homeless shelters and transitional-living programs to keep records of calls they receive from teen parents in need of shelter.

In addition, state and local governments can require TANF, child protective services, and juvenile justice caseworkers to survey the teen mothers they serve. These surveys can become part of your needs assessment. When Massachusetts officials were designing their program, for example, the state's welfare agency asked every teen mother applying for welfare whether she would enter a Second Chance Home if one were available. The state then used these answers to estimate the demand for Second Chance Homes in various communities.

Nonprofits may find it more difficult to pay for and manage needs assessments because they don't have centralized access to teen parents in their communities. In some communities, such as Wayne County, Michigan, nonprofits have defrayed costs by working together to gather and share data about needs and to create homes that meet those needs.

Another inexpensive way to conduct a needs assessment is to ask students from a local graduate school program in public policy, social work, or sociology to conduct the assessment as part of a class project or master's thesis. You will need to supervise and guide the students, but you will have the advantage of free, motivated workers and, in many cases, oversight from university professors.

Step Three
Deciding Which Families to Serve

Teens who need Second Chance Homes are often very troubled. In addition to facing all the normal challenges of adolescence, many also must overcome the difficulties caused by growing up in families where poverty, abuse, and neglect may have been persistent. And they must struggle to meet the challenges of parenthood.

Living in a Second Chance Home presents another challenge for many teen mothers – it may be the first setting where they have ever had any structure, rules to follow, and expectations to meet. For many of these young women, structure and discipline seem to be yet another burden, at least in the beginning. Thus, it's not surprising that providers in the Massachusetts Teen Living Program find their teen parent residents even more challenging to serve than teens in foster care.

Consider findings from the Teen Living Program, a 21-program network of state-funded Second Chance Homes that serve teens on TANF who cannot or will not live with their parents. This Teen Living Program data summarizes basic characteristics from 210 teen parents who volunteered to enter the Teen Living Program in 1999.

Massachusetts Teen Living Program Teens–1999	
Average age at intake	17.8 years
Average age of child at intake	1 year
Percentage of teens with more than one child (or pregnant and already parenting one child)	26 percent
Average grade level in school	10th grade
Percentage of teens who had dropped out of school at some point	75 percent
Percentage of teens who had experienced five or more living situations in their lives	51 percent
Percentage who had lived in their previous residence less than one year	66 percent
Percentage who had been homeless before entering the Teen Living Program	48 percent
Percentage who reported experiencing physical abuse as a child, from a partner, or both	40 percent
Percentage who reported some history of using drugs	21 percent
Percentage who reported receiving child support from their children's fathers	1 percent

Given demographics like these, you need to decide which teens you are best qualified to serve – and whether there are teens that you won't serve. A few tips:

Determine your age range.
Some Second Chance Homes admit teen parents of any age, from age 10 through age 19. Others accept only teens above a certain age—usually because of licensing or funding constraints.

For example, homes that receive funds from federal programs—including those administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Transitional Living Program—usually cannot spend those funds on teens under age 16.

Even if your funding or licensing situation allows you to accept teen families regardless of age, you may want to consider age restrictions based on the structure of your home or the services you provide. An apartment-based program model, for example, may not work for young teens who need close supervision and care. A group home may be too confining for older teens who are anxious to live independently.

In addition, some teen mothers may be too young to live in Second Chance Homes. Even group homes require some independent living skills. Teens must be able to complete chores, help with cooking and house management, and navigate relationships with staff members and fellow residents.

Most importantly, teens must be able to assume primary responsibility for raising their children. Staff members in Second Chance Homes can teach teens about parenting, provide emergency backup, and monitor teens' behavior with their children, but staff members should not serve as the young children's primary caretakers. When very young teen mothers—generally those under age 14—are not ready to assume primary responsibility for their children, these mothers and their babies may be better off with foster families.

Another factor to keep in mind: A teen mother's chronological age may have no bearing on her maturity. While some teen mothers may be ready to live independently, others may be years behind in terms of educational and developmental attainment. And they aren't always mature enough to realize how much help they need.

In the SPAN survey, one home admitted only teens age 17 and older. Ten of the 36 homes in the sample admitted teens ages 16 and up, four admitted teens ages 14 and up, and seven admitted teens ages 13 and up. The remaining 14 homes accepted teens under age 13—in a few cases, homes reported taking residents as young as 10.

Determine which teen families you will serve.
Some Second Chance Homes restrict the types of teen families they serve. These restrictions usually are a result of program capacity, staff expertise, licensing restrictions, or funding. Some of the more common practices:

- **Restricting by age or number of children.** Many programs simply don't have the space or the staff capacity to admit teens with more than one child or teens with older children.

- **Restricting by service population.** Some programs admit only teens who enter the program as part of a state caseload, such as teens on TANF, in foster care, or in the juvenile justice system. Advantages of this approach: Teens usually bring guaranteed funding with them, along with the additional support of state and local caseworkers. Disadvantages: Programs may have to turn away some needy teens, and they often get no choice about which families they will accept.

- **Restricting by teens' level of need.** Some programs won't take teens who have special needs, such as histories of substance addiction, severe mental illness, or violence. Second Chance Homes are not institutions, and most do not have the security, specialized staff, or services generally required of licensed treatment facilities.

- **Restricting for other qualities through a screening system.** Many Second Chance Homes screen their applicants for such factors as motivation, maturity levels, and ability to get along with other residents. Some Second Chance Home providers say that such screening is essential to keeping their programs running smoothly. But it also means that some teens in need will be turned away. Thus it's important for programs to know what alternatives are available for teens who don't meet their criteria.

Determine the time limits you'll impose.

Once you've determined which teen parents you'll serve in your program, you need to determine how long you'll let them stay. In many cases, this won't even be an issue. In the Massachusetts Teen Living Program, for example, the average stay is 6.6 months. Many teens leave Second Chance Homes after short periods because they reunite with family members or boyfriends, find permanent housing of their own (particularly common in cases where the teen parents are no longer minors), or chafe at program rules and restrictions.

But invariably, some teens will flourish in the program and may want to stay. The question is, how long can your program keep them? Time limits may seem cruel, but in most cases they are a necessity. Most programs have waiting lists of young women in desperate need, waiting to be admitted.

Also, teen mothers – like other young adults – ultimately reach the point where they can and should live on their own. Time limits can help set expectations for teens to meet this goal. At Jean's House in Columbus, Georgia, the time limit is one year from entry; at My Choice in Holton and Portland, Maine, teens are strongly encouraged to leave after six months. But the programs acknowledge that these deadlines are flexible, and they don't discharge teens who have nowhere else to go.

Time limits are common in U.S. Housing and Urban Development-funded homes because most HUD residential assistance is limited to two years. Other programs, such as the state-run Second Chance Home network in Texas, place strict age limits on their programs. Texas stops paying for the teens' placements when they turn 18½. This limit makes sense if there are funding limitations or high demand for the homes, but it also risks pushing residents out before they are ready to leave. As many providers have

noted, turning 18 does not automatically turn teen parents into self-sufficient adults. Massachusetts allows teens to stay until they are 20; New Mexico allows them to stay until they turn 22 if they are attending school.

Some programs that offer services only to girls under 18 have found that with an average intake age of 17, they don't have enough time to make a significant impact. Both Rhode Island and Nevada changed their programs to include residents through age 18 as long as they are enrolled in school.

In the SPAN survey, four homes required residents to leave when they turn age 22, five required residents to leave at age 21, seven required them to leave at age 20, and one required them to leave at age 19. Seven homes required teens to leave at age 18, though most allowed mothers who had not yet completed high school to stay longer. Eight homes imposed no maximum age limit.

In deciding what time limits your program will adopt, you also need to look at what housing and support options are available to low-income mothers in your community. Are shelters available and safe for young families? Are they over capacity? Would you be willing to discharge a resident into a homeless shelter? What about transitional-living programs for homeless youth and independent living programs for youth who have aged out of foster care?

Ironically, 18- and 19-year-old teen parents may have fewer housing and support options in your community than younger teen parents. In Detroit, county-funded Second Chance Homes have found that older teens are the most receptive because they understand the difficulties of living on their own. In Massachusetts, more than half of all Teen Living Program residents are over 18 and enter the program by choice, not because of the TANF living requirement. These teens need safe housing and short-term support while they look for stable jobs and housing.

Finally, whatever time limits you impose, remember that you'll most likely have to keep them flexible.

Decide how you will accommodate fathers.

You need to decide whether you will provide residential services to families headed by or including teen *fathers*. Most state funding is focused on the custodial parents. Because teen mothers are much more likely to have custody of their children than fathers, chances are slim that your program will be required to serve males. But for equity reasons, state- and community-run Second Chance Home programs must be sure that they have residential services available to teen fathers if needed. In Massachusetts, only one teen father has requested placement in a Second Chance Home.

One home, 22 Park Avenue, which is run by the YWCA of Greater Portland, Maine, provides residential services for families headed by mothers, fathers, or both parents. "If you want fathers to have more than a token role in their family, then you have to provide them with more than token services," says John Herrick, co-manager.

At 22 Park Avenue, where each couple has its own apartment, parents must go through a rigorous application process to show they are prepared to work together to raise their children. *(To read more about 22 Park Avenue, see page 18.)*

Confront the Custody Question.

Finally, you must decide how to handle custody issues. By definition, Second Chance Homes serve minor teen mothers. Will teens in your Second Chance Home remain (technically, at least) in the custody of their parents? Or will they be in the custody of the state child protective services or juvenile justice systems?

As of the fall of 2000, none of the five state-run Second Chance Home programs took custody of teen parents as a requirement for entry into a Second Chance Home. Massachusetts, however, offered Second Chance Homes as an alternative to foster homes for teen parents in state custody.

Most states do not take custody of teen parents for a variety of reasons. Sometimes, states are seeking to avoid administrative and legal difficulties. State child protective services systems are often too overburdened to cope with an influx of teen parent cases. Also, states simply may not have grounds to take custody. Frequently, teen mothers are subject to abuse or neglect from their own families. Yet this abuse or neglect may not be documented concurrently with their pregnancies, leaving states with little ground to take custody. Finally, in many states, homelessness is not considered a reasonable ground for taking teens into custody.

States may not take custody of teen parents for other reasons, often related to the effectiveness of states' programs. Taking custody actually may prevent states from running successful Second Chance Homes. For instance, it may be counterproductive for states to prosecute teens' parents and alienate families. And teen mothers often won't voluntarily enter Second Chance Homes if they have to enter state custody to do so. If states take custody of teen mothers when no Second Chance Home placements are available, the states may be forced to place mothers and their babies in separate foster homes, completely undermining the states' goal of supporting teen families. Also, if states have custody, teens can't be sanctioned or terminated in Second Chance Homes if they are found to be using drugs, breaking rules, or not attending school. Being forced to keep such teens in Second Chance Homes may jeopardize the progress of other teens and programs in general.

If states don't take custody, however, providers can be on shaky legal ground. What legal grounds do they have to supervise residents, dispense medication, or discipline teen mothers? Even admitting a minor to the hospital to give birth requires multiple consent signatures. Providers need to know what risks they are taking, and states should clarify this in licensing regulations.

Rhode Island and Wayne County, Michigan, have resolved this problem by requiring parental consent for teens to enter government-funded Second Chance Homes. Parents are almost always willing to sign consent forms.

Massachusetts has taken a different approach, adjusting its licensing regulations for residential programs for teen parents. Because the state child protective agency places all teens in the homes, and the state office for child care licenses all programs, the state government has assumed the majority of the liability. The state's regulations allow a "mature minor" (as determined by the program) to sign herself into a program. Parents are then notified, but parental consent is not required. In the first five years of the Massachusetts program, no parents challenged their daughters' placements.

None of the state-run programs takes custody of the teen mothers' babies. Why? State officials determined that taking custody would discourage girls from entering the program. In Massachusetts, the Teen Living Program assumes the teen parent always is responsible and has custody of her child. In fact, if she loses custody, she is no longer eligible to stay in the home.

Finally, none of the state-run programs *requires* teens to enter Second Chance Homes. In Rhode Island, Nevada, and Massachusetts, teens lose their welfare benefits if they refuse to enter homes or live with their families, but no one forces them to enter the homes against their will. These states have found that if teens enter the homes voluntarily, it makes huge differences in the effort teen mothers put into achieving their goals and in their conduct in the homes.

Serving Dads Too:
22 Park Avenue, Portland, Maine

At 22 Park Avenue, a Second Chance Home in Portland, Maine, Kathy Chaiklin, John Herrick, and Lorrie Marx-Adams serve teen *families*. Mothers, fathers, and young children live together in a one- or two-bedroom apartments. 22 Park Avenue's philosophy: Keep the family together.

Chaiklin designed the program in 1987, when she and co-workers serving teen parents realized that day programs didn't meet all the teens' needs. Despite counselors' best efforts, "Months of work would come undone when teens went back to destructive relationships because they had nowhere else to go," says Chaiklin.

Including fathers in the residential program seemed only logical. As Chaiklin points out, "If we don't assist them in dealing productively with issues as a family, anything else we give them will be nothing more than a band-aid. If you are preaching family values, how can you justify breaking up the family?"

It would take three years of writing grant applications and raising money before 22 Park Avenue's doors opened in 1990. Funding from the United Way and a HUD grant got the program started. And a capital campaign through the YWCA netted $200,000 to purchase the building. Chaiklin looked for a site in the heart of town, on the bus line, and near the YWCA and other agencies where additional services would be offered. The small, four-story apartment building she found includes seven one- or two-bedroom units, as well as office space and a community room on the first floor.

While Chaiklin handles the fundraising and administration, Herrick and Marx-Adams work directly with the residents. Herrick works with the men; Marx-Adams focuses on the women.

In addition to dealing with the residents' day-to-day issues, the social workers meet individually with each young parent once a week. They also run separate support groups for men and women each week. Herrick estimates that about 98 percent of the families in the program have histories of substance abuse in their families. Many also have family histories of domestic violence. "Our clients are old before their time due to suffering and trauma," says Herrick. "They need to feel safe and secure and they both need to bond with their children."

The staff shares a common passion and philosophy toward their work. Marx-Adams says that staff members must develop sympathetic relationships with their clients, and she and Herrick agree that direct care workers need to "meet the client where they are at." Says Herrick, "Respond to their needs, not to an agenda."

Chaiklin, Herrick, and Marx-Adams say that having a male staff member working with male residents is crucial. Herrick points out that society perpetuates negative messages to males, adding, "How can we hope to engage them with their children if we don't offer them an equal and valued place in the program?"

The residents agree that the program's dedication to fathers is a major strength. Amy, mother of one, and Heather, mother of two, insist they would not be living at 22 Park Avenue if their children's fathers were not included. Amy waits for her 21-year-old boyfriend to come home from work so they can have dinner together every night. Heather, who is married but living apart from her husband while they sort out some difficulties, says she chose 22 Park Avenue because going to a mothers'-only program would have ended all hope of making the relationship work.

While there is no set minimum age (resident are accepted based upon their ability to meet the requirements of independent living), most parents served are between 16 and 22. Parental consent is required for all minors who live at 22 Park Avenue. Most parents, according to Chaiklin, are eager for their children to live in a safe and supervised setting, so they readily consent. But Chaiklin points out that not every young family is suitable for the program. Thus, when potential applicants call, they are referred to the YWCA's day program; if they show a commitment to working hard in that program, they are interviewed for admission to 22 Park Avenue. Current residents also participate in the interviews to ensure that the best interests of the community are considered. This intensive screening process aims to keep 22 Park Avenue a supportive, nurturing home for all of its residents.

Residents agree that the one of the program's strongest aspects is that the young families share household duties and advice on parenting. "It's good for the moms but better for the kids," says Heather, who watches Amy's son while Amy attends classes at a local technical college.

Residents pay fees of $365 to $425 a month, which cover all services, including access to a food pantry stocked by an anonymous benefactor. Chaiklin says that if she were redesigning the program, she would not charge rent. "It would have been better to raise additional funding and let residents use their limited funds to practice budgeting and save some for the future."

Residents can stay at 22 Park Avenue for up to two years, but generally leave after about 14 months—often when they receive federal Section 8 housing subsidies. But others choose to stay longer. "Some have realized that they just weren't ready for living on their own yet, so they pass up their Section 8. That's a tough decision for a young parent to make," says Herrick. But thanks to 22 Park Avenue, young families have a place to stay until they feel ready to move on.

Step Four (for Providers)
Structuring Your Program

Once you've figured out which families you're going to serve, you need to think about *how*. Is your Second Chance Home going to be a group home or a cluster of shared or individual apartments? How many teens will you serve at one time? If your state funds Second Chance Homes, should you become a contractor to the state? Here are some issues to consider:

Licensing

Licensing is the minimal standard a state will accept for services. In the case of Second Chance Homes, licensing can cover everything from facility requirements to staffing to procedures.

Being a licensed provider means your program is willing to accept outside oversight. Some standards may be very costly to meet, such as fire codes or handicapped accessibility rules. Other standards may be less stringent than you will want for your program.

Most state and federal funding sources require programs to be licensed. Licensing also reduces a program's liability. It prevents a program from cutting corners on safety and services even when funding gets tight.

Because Second Chance Homes are relatively new, your state may not have licensing regulations specific to them. This may be a hurdle that you will need to work with the state to overcome. For example, Florence Crittenton Services in San Francisco, California, is licensed to serve youth ages 7-17. Although state officials are fully aware that the Second Chance Home serves infants and toddlers as well, there is simply no state license in California that covers both teens and their children.

If you choose not to obtain a license, you will probably save money on compliance costs and retain more autonomy over your program. Foregoing a license, however, may make your program ineligible for some federal and state funding sources. You also may be forced to set a minimum age requirement for residents because states generally require Second Chance Homes serving younger teens to be licensed.

Group Homes vs. Apartments

You may not have a choice when it comes to your program's physical setting. Your city may have a shortage of homes with plenty of bedrooms and bathrooms in neighborhoods zoned for congregate care facilities. Or you may not be able to find a single apartment building that will rent you multiple apartments—especially when the building's managers find out their new tenants would be teen families.

But assuming that you do have the luxury of finding your ideal facility, you need to decide what works best for your program. Second Chance Homes generally offer one or more of the following housing options:

- group homes where teen families share bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchen facilities, and common areas,
- group homes where each teen family gets its own bedroom, but shares bathrooms, kitchens, and common areas,
- apartment clusters where two to three teen families share each apartment, and program staff members often live or work in one of the apartments, allowing their apartment to serve as a "common room" for the teens, or
- apartment clusters where each teen family has their own apartment, with program staff living or working in apartments nearby.

Both group homes and apartments have their advantages and disadvantages—depending on the teens you want to serve. The chart below illustrates how an advantage for one program may be a disadvantage for another:

Group Homes...	Apartments...
Can be expensive for programs to rent or acquire.	May have to be purchased and maintained by programs; It may also be difficult to find SCH-friendly landlords.
Offer a family-like atmosphere.	May train teens more effectively for independent living.
May ensure closer staff supervision.	Allow teens more autonomy.
Place strong emphasis on improving personal relationships because teens and staff members share close quarters.	Offer more space and privacy for teens.
Afford teens the opportunity to learn cooperation by sharing household chores.	Encourage teens to assume more individual responsibility for household chores.
May be more suitable for young teens who are not ready for too much independence.	May be more suitable for older teens who are getting ready to live on their own.

The Visions Teen Parent Home in Massachusetts was built with both models in mind. A large group home offers individual bedrooms for teen families, a large common kitchen, a dining room, a playroom and a meeting area. There are also individual apartments attached to the main building. As teens demonstrate their ability to live independently, they move from the group home into the apartments, but have continued support.

Regardless of which housing model you choose, providers suggest it's best to arrange separate bedrooms for each teen family. Teens need privacy to nurse their babies, tend to infants who wake up in the middle of the night, and do their homework. They may also be more willing to stay in your program if they have their own rooms. In Massachusetts, the state requires its 21 state-funded Second Chance Homes to offer separate bedrooms that are at least 100 square feet in size (10'x10') to each teen family. Larger bedrooms are required for teen mothers with more than one child.

Program Size

Six to eight families appears to be the ideal size for a program. In larger programs, the family atmosphere may be compromised, and staff members may not be able to provide the intensive personalized attention that teens and their babies need so badly. Lisa Goldblatt Grace, who runs Just a Start House in Somerville, Massachusetts, advises, "Keep it small—10 families or less."

While keeping programs small is important, smaller size may produce higher costs. Some providers have found that 24-hour supervision—essential in homes with very young teens or teens who need intensive services—is not affordable unless homes serve more than five teen families.

Staffing

Designing a program includes determining the staffing structure. Most programs have a program director—usually someone with a master's degree in social work or a related field—in charge of staffing and overall program operation. Other staff members handle counseling, parenting and life skills training, and general supervision.

Other Second Chance Homes eschew the program director model in favor of hiring house parents to live in the home and provide most services. House parent models have worked well in Massachusetts but not as well in Michigan and Nevada. The key appears to be building in "off time" for the house parent on a frequent basis.

Time and again, providers report that a good facility is useless without a good staff, and good staff members are hard to find. Often, a staff member's educational background is not as important as his or her experience with teenagers or as a parent. "Many people have big hearts but they aren't prepared for what it takes to work with these teens," reports Diana Bremseth of the Mother-Infant Program at the Florence Crittenton Agency in Knoxville. "A person has to really buy into the program."

Regardless of your staffing model, be aware that staff turnover rates in Second Chance Homes are often high because the compensation is low and the stress is significant. Programs need to build incentives and support for staff into the program design. Continued training is also crucial.

Contracting with the Government

Operating as a state or local government contractor carries many advantages. You have a guaranteed source of funding, and you are almost guaranteed a steady stream of clients.

Often, you can count on government agencies for program support as well. Government agencies may have detailed case files that provide insights about the services your clients need. These agencies may assign caseworkers to teen clients, saving you the time and expense of extensive case management. These agencies also can help you link teens to other resources. And in some areas, government agencies provide technical assistance, training, and emotional support to their contractors. For example, in Massachusetts, program directors from the 21 state-funded Second Chance Homes meet every other month to discuss common problems and share ideas.

The disadvantages? Many states and communities don't pay for empty beds, so programs receive funds only when teens are in placement. In addition, becoming a state contractor means accepting state oversight and expectations. The state may dictate which families you serve, what curriculum you use, the content of your service plans, and even your curfews.

In addition, faith-based programs may need to alter some of their services to comply with state requirements. For instance, under most "charitable choice" laws, faith-based programs can act as government contractors, but they cannot proselytize or require teen families to attend religious services. For Second Chance Homes that view religion as central to their mission and services, a state contract might not be worth the money.

Whether contracting with the state is right for you depends a great deal on whether your agency provides comprehensive services already. Larger full-service agencies appear less interested in joining statewide networks because states have little to offer them. Smaller nonprofits, which may not have sophisticated fundraising techniques or connections to other services residents need, generally appreciate being a part of a larger network.

A Second Chance for Teen Moms in Foster Care: The Florence Crittenton Agency, Knoxville, TN

Many Second Chance Homes must make do with less-than-ideal facilities. Not so for the Florence Crittenton Mother-Infant Home of Knoxville, Tennessee. This 5,000 square foot facility is nestled on a 26-acre campus that also includes a maternity home, a residential program for non-parenting teen girls, programs for teens living in the community, medical and pediatric care, a secondary school serving students with special needs, and a child-care center.

The Mother-Infant Program serves six young mothers ages 13 to 17 and their children in a dormitory-style home. These young mothers, most of whom are in foster care, are allowed to stay six months. As a licensed mental health treatment facility, the Mother-Infant Program may serve mothers with substance abuse and trauma issues. The weekly schedule includes job training, human sexuality and pediatric development classes, parenting classes, and recreation. Volunteer mentors take teen families on outings off campus. Adoption counseling and outreach to fathers and families are provided as well.

Yet even with all of these services available, staff members find that it still isn't easy to serve teen parents.

Cile Mathews, executive director of the Florence Crittenton Agency, and Diane Bremseth, the programming coordinator, began working to make the Mother-Infant Program a reality in the early 1990s. "We weren't satisfied by the outcomes of our clients from our maternity program who were going home and ending up back in foster care in six weeks or being separated from their children," says Mathews. "We wanted to increase their chance of successful parenting."

Despite the clear need for the Mother-Infant Program, Mathews and Bremseth had a hard time

getting started. They worked with other agencies, wrote proposals to the Tennessee Department Of Children's Services, and even hired an architect to design a facility for them, but funding never came through.

Finally, in 1996, Bremseth and Mathews realized they could wait no longer when one of their maternity home clients refused to return home to an abusive situation. "The state had checked out the home and said it was okay," Mathews recalls, "but she refused. So we had to come up with an alternative for her."

In just three months, they pulled the program together. "We didn't have any money to do it," said Bremseth. "We just did it." Fortunately, The Crittenton Agency had already purchased and moved to a 26-acre former hospital site a few years earlier. One building on the campus was easily converted to make space for the new program. Bremseth and Mathews also could call on staff members from other Florence Crittenton programs on campus for help, and the two women had good relationships with donors in the community. The Junior League donated beds and rocking chairs. The local hospital donated layettes. A physician and nurse from the University of Tennessee hospital volunteered to help provide medical care.

Finding the funding was a lot harder. "The challenge with funding," notes Mathews, "is that most funders are focusing on teen pregnancy prevention, not day-to-day service." While state officials were supportive of the idea, says Mathews, "getting the paperwork through to fund the home was another story."

Initially, the state foster care agency gave Florence Crittenton only $15 a day per teen family; eventually, the state raised its contribution to as much as $46 a day per family. Yet actual costs for Florence Crittenton run as high as $150 a day per teen family, and for the first three years, the program ran a deficit. Today, the Mother-Infant Program supplements its budget with an aggressive fundraising campaign that includes the United Way, family foundations, and special fundraising events.

Six months after the Mother-Infant Program opened its doors, the program was fully occupied. The reason? The facility's accommodations and supportive services. Each teen family has their own room and shares a connecting kitchen and bath with another teen family. Bremseth says that when residents must share their living space this way, it helps them buy into the peer culture the home tries to create. "Milieu therapy is one of the most important things we do...they are able to learn different behaviors and try them out on their peers. This is where the real work gets done."

Even with decades of experience serving adolescent females, Mathews says, "Of all the things that we have done, mother-infant programming is the hardest." Bremseth says the staff must be especially vigilant with emotionally and behaviorally disturbed parents. "They have a history of being abused themselves, so they don't realize that some of what they are doing is abusive or neglectful." Bremseth notes that in recent years, the staff has seen an increase in aggressive behavior by the residents: "The kids are more hopeless and helpless." Many have no family support. At one point, all the residents had at least one parent serving jail time.

Since 1996, 49 young mothers have called the Mother-Infant Program home. And while Bremseth and Mathews cannot contact former residents because of foster care confidentiality rules, many of the former residents contact them, including the young woman who provided the inspiration for their program by refusing to return to an abusive home. She graduated from high school and now lives with supportive relatives while raising her child. And, they say, she is accomplishing what they hoped for most: She is learning to be a good mother.

Step Five (for Policymakers)
Determining the State's Role

Whether you are a state legislator or an official with the state welfare or child protective services agency, if you are launching a statewide or community-wide Second Chance Homes network, you'll face a number of key decisions. Below are some of the most critical questions you will have to answer:

How Should Your State Administer the Program?

Currently five states and one county operate Second Chance Home programs, and a sixth state, Georgia, began the process of creating a statewide network in the fall of 2000. No state or community operates its Second Chance Homes directly. Instead, they contract with nonprofits to operate the homes, usually through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process.

States vary dramatically in terms of how closely they are involved with the Second Chance Home programs they fund. Generally, states run their programs according to one of three models: "top-down," "collaborative," or "bottom-up."

As you read about these models, it's helpful to keep a few questions in mind:

- What aspects of each model do you appreciate? Dislike?
- What state or community capacities do you have to operate each model?
- Which model is more appropriate for your state or community's culture and political climate?

The Top-Down Model

In top-down programs, state or community agencies assume primary responsibility for major aspects of program design and administration. They write the requests for proposal (RFPs), select contractors who will operate Second Chance Homes, and closely monitor those contracts. They design and oversee eligibility, assessment, and referral procedures. They get to know each resident's needs and place her accordingly. And they fund most, if not all, program costs.

In top-down models, states allow individual nonprofit providers to hire staff, choose and maintain facilities, manage the daily operation of the homes, and coordinate local services for each teen. To operate top-down models, states must make a commitment of personnel and funding.

The Massachusetts Teen Living Program is a top-down model. It is administered by three full-time employees of the state's Department of Social Services and one supervisor. A program development specialist coordinates all contracts and evaluations for the 21 programs. A network coordinator plays the crucial role of linking the state agency to the programs on a daily basis. The coordinator reviews every case, places teens in the most appropriate available homes, sets priorities for placement when there are waiting lists, and helps program directors manage difficult cases. The third staff member maintains the database that tracks all residents, assigns and tracks assessments,

and handles billing. The supervisor oversees the program as part of other residential services offered by the state. *(To read more about the Massachusetts program, see page 33.)*

The advantages of top-down models:

- State-run programs ensure consistent statewide access, because all eligible teens are evaluated using the same criteria and have the opportunity to receive the same services.
- The programs can provide individualized services, because states can place teens in the homes most appropriate for their needs.
- The state can guarantee which services a teen will receive, because programs do not rely on outside sources for funding.
- State-run programs provide support and technical assistance to the homes in their network.
- Programs can rely on guaranteed funding.

The disadvantages of top-down models:

- The state must foot the majority of the bill and dedicate personnel to the program.
- Programs have no right to refuse teens because of program criteria, nor do they have the ability to admit teens who don't meet state eligibility criteria.
- Programs must abide by state standards, leaving them less flexibility.

The Collaborative Model

Some states choose to share responsibility with nonprofits. This is the approach that the Georgia Department of Human Resources is taking as it launches its Second Chance Homes program. In doing so, they can follow Rhode Island's lead.

The collaborative model requires the state to relinquish some program authority. A statewide nonprofit with the capacity to operate different sites takes over day-to-day administration of the program. This model places an intermediary between the program and the state to deal with daily issues.

The collaborative model maintains many of the advantages of the top-down model without the state bureaucracy. Much of its success, however, rests on the capacity of the statewide nonprofit in charge. Such an organization must have the respect of providers and state officials, so that both sides feel their concerns are fairly represented.

The Rhode Island legislature established a state-funded, statewide network of Second Chance Homes, which opened in May 1999 with six homes and 15 slots for TANF-eligible teen parents. The program costs the state about $580,000 per year.

Unlike the Massachusetts program, the Rhode Island New Opportunity Homes program is managed in conjunction with a pregnancy-prevention nonprofit, the Comprehensive Community Action Program. Rhode Island still has consistent eligibility requirements, assessment, referral, and services across the state, and a multi-agency team meets monthly to review all applications for entry. But the Comprehensive Community Action Program handles much of the program design and oversight responsibilities. *(To read more about the Rhode Island program, see page 38.)*

Bottom-Up Model

Finally, states can offer seed money to Second Chance Homes and set some basic standards, but leave virtually all the details—such as assessment and referral procedures, service mix, and program rules—to the programs themselves. This bottom-up approach is the one that New Mexico, the first state with a Second Chance Homes network, has pursued successfully for a decade.

The New Mexico legislature appropriates $517,000 each year to the Children, Youth and Family Department for a Second Chance Homes program. The department makes grants to nine Second Chance Homes throughout the state; these homes provide 75 slots to teen mothers up to age 22.

Clearly the state's contribution does not cover all of the program costs; additional funds are donated in kind or raised by nonprofits operating homes. And all operation of the program is community-based. Lead agencies in each community are responsible for designing their program, developing assessment and referral procedures, finding a site, bringing local partners on board to provide services, and raising enough money to open their doors. *(To read more about the New Mexico program, see page 55.)*

Bottom-up programs like New Mexico's benefit from having true community support. Being community-based also means a teen parent can walk in and be admitted quickly and easily. However, bottom-up programs also can be difficult to sustain over time; New Mexico has seen several local programs close their doors over the years. Additionally, because the state does not standardize assessment, referral, or services, program quality can be somewhat uneven. And when efforts are solely community-based, if no lead agency in a community takes the initiative to bring partners together, that community will have no Second Chance Home.

A Safe Haven: Jessica's Story

In the summer of 2000, Jessica was 17 years old and living with her baby son, Josea, born two months premature because of Jessica's high blood pressure. Josea's 22-year-old father, who had also fathered a child with a 14-year-old girl, had been evicted from their apartment because of violent behavior.

"I was just going to stay with him," Jessica remembers, "but one day he hit me real hard and the police got involved and filed a child abuse report with the state. They said I would have to go into foster care." But because the state where she was then living had no Second Chance Homes for teen mothers in foster care, Jessica and Josea would have been sent to separate foster homes.

So Jessica tried to return to her mother in Massachusetts, only to find her living in an already overcrowded apartment and to be told she could not stay. Living with her father was not an option either due to previous abuse she had experienced. Jessica went to the local welfare office and she was on her way to a Second Chance Home within hours.

Jessica's Second Chance Home is housed in a three-story duplex. Jessica and Josea have a room

of their own just off the kitchen and living area shared by staff members and other residents. Because hers was an emergency placement, Jessica is waiting for social workers to complete an assessment and decide which of the state's 21 Second Chance Homes – including a secure site for victims of domestic violence – will be best for her.

For now, though, she likes the home she's in. The staff has helped by taking care of her baby and giving her a chance to catch up on sleep. But she wishes that there were even more staff members around to talk with. "If I were making my own program, I would have a lot of people around to talk with the girls," she says, "because I know you can get so depressed and overwhelmed."

Jessica hopes to stay in a Second Chance Home until she is 18 and receives a Section 8 housing subsidy for her own apartment. Then she plans to work toward her goal of becoming a social worker. As for Josea, he is three months old and thriving. "I don't care what I have to go through," says Jessica. "My child comes first. As long as I am with him, that's all that matters."

Should You Start With a Pilot or Go Statewide?

In some state legislatures, policymakers feel that given the housing crisis many teen parents face, Second Chance Home programs should be available statewide, or at least in metropolitan centers.

Others advocate starting with a pilot project and expanding over time. This was the approach that Texas adopted, opening its program as a pilot with four sites, only one of which actually provides residential services. Maryland also has a Second Chance Homes pilot; since 1997 the state has provided full funding for the three-family Living and Learning Center in Baltimore. Both Maryland and Texas are conducting rigorous evaluations of their pilot programs with the goal of improving and/or expanding them over time.

Each approach has advantages and disadvantages. Pilot programs are less expensive, but they serve few families. In addition, it can be difficult to evaluate success—or win public support for expanding the program—because pilot program samples of teens and providers are too small. The Family and Children's Services of Central Maryland, which operates the Living and Learning Center under a state contract, has impressive results from a rigorous independent evaluation, but the program has served only nine participants. When funding for the pilot expired in 1999, only last-minute lobbying by the state Department of Human Resources secured funds for the Living and Learning Center to continue.

Statewide programs, in contrast, can provide services to any teen in need. They also can reach the critical mass that many social programs need to gain public support and succeed in the long run. However, they must cope with the negative stereotypes many teens have about state-run institutions. And statewide programs need more funding up front.

Any program—large or small—must be prepared for low demand at the outset. Massachusetts, Nevada, and Rhode Island all reported low demand for Second Chance Homes in the first year of their programs. It was only later on, as word spread among teen mothers that Second Chance Homes were good places to live, that teens began to trust the system and seek entry.

How Much Should You Spend?

Veterans of the process suggest that the best way to answer that question is to price the services you want Second Chance Homes to provide, then determine how many teen parents will need Second Chance Homes—or how many the state can afford to serve. In reality, most programs simply take the funds allocated to their programs and use that to determine how many families they can afford to serve.

Massachusetts and Rhode Island estimated costs by looking at current residential program costs. They also surveyed potential residents. Using those numbers, they projected the number of teen parents who would enter the program and the cost of serving them.

Kelly Rogers runs the Second Chance Homes program in Wayne County, Michigan's Strong Families/Safe Children Unit. She suggests that programs should not try to overreach. Rogers says they should make sure they offer comprehensive services—even if it means fewer beds.

To get an idea of what a Second Chance Home program might cost, you may want to look at the budgets of transitional-living programs and homeless shelters already operating in your area *(see Step Nine)*. Most of the cost will depend on housing prices and staff salaries, which vary greatly by state and region. You should then decide issues such as:

- what services you will require programs to provide,
- what regulations you will require programs to meet,
- to what extent existing services in the community can be used to keep program costs down,
- whether you will require communities and nonprofits to put up matching funding,
- whether you want to be the primary funder of the program or whether you simply want to provide "seed money" for private programs, and
- whether you will fund any capital and start-up costs. Rogers points out that new programs need funding to find sites, rehabilitate the buildings to meet required building codes, hire and train staff, apply for licensing, and develop protocols for service. She learned this the hard way, when she didn't budget funds for these costs into her grant application for the Wayne County Supportive Housing Program.

All of these decisions influence program costs. In Massachusetts, state funds cover most program operating costs, providers are paid even when beds are empty, and the state requires programs to meet strict standards and provide extensive services including 24-hour staffing. Thus, costs are high: $5.3 million a year to offer 120 beds. On average, the

state spends $39,000 per bed each year. (Each "bed" is actually a private room that accommodates a mother and at least one child.) This figure does not include the actual cost of providing cash welfare benefits, child care, or counseling to teens—these costs are picked up by other state and federal programs. But it does cover the cost of administration, assessments, housing, staffing, some food, and all other services.

At the other end of the cost spectrum is New Mexico, which has created a statewide Second Chance Homes network with 75 beds for only $517,000 in state funds. That works out to less than $7,000 per year, per bed from the state. Additional costs are contributed in kind or raised by the local community. New Mexico keeps its costs low by spending its state funds in the form of seed grants, rather than contracting with homes to provide services.

New Mexico also keeps its demands low; Second Chance Homes in the state network do not have to meet state licensing requirements, provide 24-hour staffing, or guarantee that teens will receive a wide range of services. The program relies on local community groups and churches to deliver most services. According to Barbara Otto Dennis of the New Mexico Children, Youth and Family Department, "You can do whatever you want; you just have to gather more partners if you have less money."

However, when asked how they maintain funding for program services, many Second Chance Home providers say, "We beg." Without a guaranteed funding source, programs often spend more time chasing funding than serving residents.

What Kind of Licensing Will You Require?

Unless you're opting for a bottom-up program model (and maybe even then), you'll have to think about licensing. Licensing is the baseline of what a state can accept in a program. The more licensing requirements, the more expensive the programs.

In Massachusetts, the state modified current regulations for group homes for adolescents in state custody to serve Second Chance Homes. Areas that Massachusetts chooses to regulate include:

- **Facilities**. States may regulate bedroom size, building code requirements (sprinkler systems, handicapped accessibility, emergency exits on upper floors, lead-free paint), number of bathroom facilities, and child safety requirements.
- **Procedures**. Contractors must adhere to standard service plans, placement agreements, service protocols, and reporting requirements.
- **Staffing**. Providers must meet staff training requirements and staffing ratios.

Be wary of the time it may take to license several new programs at once. In Rhode Island, for example, the programs were slow to open because the licensing authority was not able to review all of the new sites at once.

Also be sure that licensing requirements and building codes are consistent. In Massachusetts, questions arose as to whether the homes should be classified as "group homes" (because the residents were minors) or as "boarding houses" (because the teens weren't in state custody), and each designation required different building codes and zoning.

Finally, if you must adhere to licensing regulations, be prepared to help programs meet their capital improvement expenses. For example, nonprofits rarely can afford $40,000 sprinkler systems.

What Will You Do in the Short Term?

Once you've secured the funding, it usually takes one year to 18 months for states to launch statewide Second Chance Homes programs. The three initial phases—needs assessment and initial planning, the request for proposal (RFP) process, and program start up time (including hiring and training staff, meeting licensing requirements, and recruiting teens to the program)—each take four to six months to complete.

In the meantime, teen families in your area will still need shelter and services. And legislators, government agencies, and foundations that provided funds may want to see some results.

Therefore, you may want to consider short-term, emergency contracts with existing homes that provide residential services to teen families. For example, there may be a foster care group home in your area willing to take on additional clients, or a transitional-living facility with excess capacity that can adapt its program to begin serving teen families immediately. Massachusetts did this, by signing one-year contracts with 10 providers.

By doing so, Massachusetts officials were able to begin serving teen families just five months after the legislature established the program. In addition, the sole source contracts acted as an informal pilot program, enabling the Department of Social Services to learn from experience as it developed the final RFP. The downside: Some of the sole source contractors did not win contracts in the final RFP process, which meant that the state had to move some teens to new homes, disrupting their progress.

What Will You Do When It's Time for Residents to Go?

Teen families can't live in Second Chance Homes forever. All of the government-funded networks impose age limits on their programs; some impose time limits as well. It is inevitable that some teens will hit those limits before they are emotionally or financially ready to leave Second Chance Homes and, in some cases, even when teens are ready, there may not be affordable housing available.

You should to decide whether your age and time limits are set in stone—and what provisions you can make for teen families when they complete the Second Chance Homes program. Can you give Second Chance Home residents priority for Section 8 vouchers or transitional-living programs? Can you help them pay their first month's rent? Will you ensure that teen families are not discharged from Second Chance Homes to homeless shelters or the streets—even if that means denying placement to needy younger teens? Can you establish a less structured transitional apartment-based program so teens can move gradually towards independence?

In Massachusetts, the Teen Living Program's policy is never to discharge a teen from a Second Chance Home if she has no other place to go. This means that some teens have

stayed in Second Chance Homes even after they reach the program's age limit of 20. More frequently, however, Second Chance Home residents receive Section 8 vouchers that enable them to move to subsidized housing.

The questions get even more difficult when teens choose to leave Second Chance Homes – or are expelled from them. Most homes in the SPAN survey indicate that teens leave before they should – usually because they don't like program rules and services, because they encounter pressure from families and boyfriends, or because they are expelled.

Private programs usually work with teens leaving their programs to find alternative placements, either with relatives or in other Second Chance Homes. In government-run programs, the choices are harder, because expelling a resident may mean that she becomes homeless or loses custody of her child. States officials should think carefully about which infractions warrant expulsion, which services they will provide to teens leaving the program voluntarily, and what actions officials should take to protect the safety of teen families leaving Second Chance Homes.

For instance, in Massachusetts many teens leave their Second Chance Homes before the Teen Living Program staff members feel they are ready, and the state occasionally expels residents for major rule infractions such as violence or drug abuse. Regardless of whether teens choose to leave or are asked to leave, Massachusetts offers follow-up services, such as support groups and home visits. State law precludes offering minor teens cash assistance while they are living independently.

The Teen Living Program also emphasizes that teens are free to return, and a significant number of teens return voluntarily after a few weeks or months on their own.

The Comprehensive Model:
The Massachusetts Teen Living Program

Massachusetts passed its state welfare reform law in April 1995, one year before federal welfare reform. The legislation was similar to other reform measures that drew heavily on the idea of work first and focused on changing the mission of the state's welfare agency, now called the Department of Transitional Assistance.

The Massachusetts plan differed from other states, however, in that it took steps to ensure that no teen mother would be forced off welfare for lack of an adult-supervised living situation. An important component of the Massachusetts welfare reform effort was its funding of a statewide network of "Teen Living Programs (TLPs)."

Guided by the legislature's view that teen mothers under the age of 18 are children themselves, state officials decided to offer these young mothers supportive, supervised housing in the care of the agency responsible for child protection, the Department of Social Services (DSS). Since 1995, more than 600 young mothers have received shelter and support in 21 homes across the state. Many of these young mothers arrive with nothing more than a paper bag with a few belongings; they often lack the most basic things their children need, such as diapers, bottles, and clothing.

The Design

Each TLP is run by a non-profit organization experienced in working with teen parents or operating residential programs. The structures of the homes vary. Some are large group homes with shared kitchen and living areas. Others are clusters of shared apartments.

Residents abide by a system of rewards and responsibilities. The young mothers receive all necessary services from the TLP or an outside agency: counseling; medical services; job training; parenting and life skills classes; case management; child care; and TANF cash assistance.

Residents pay 30 percent of their TANF benefits in program fees. In return, they must live by the house rules. The state also requires teens living in the homes to continue their education or – if they have completed high school – to work or attend college.

The Challenges

Teens in TLPs are difficult to serve, often because they don't want to admit they need help. Many have experienced sexual abuse or domestic violence: Such abuse is so prevalent that one TLP is a secure site specifically for girls needing to escape batterers, and the state announced plans in 2000 to open a second secure site. Many of their children are developmentally delayed. The teen parents lack basic living skills, such as budgeting, and personal skills, such as managing conflict. TLP staff members work with teens to develop those skills, both in structured classes and in day-to-day living.

Most important, though, the programs' staff members give the young mothers something most have lacked all their lives: one-on-one attention and encouragement. These young women lack basic self-esteem and a sense of hope about the future. While these deficits can't be overcome in just a few months, seeds of confidence can be planted and basic life skills can be taught. And most importantly, teen parents can learn to make decisions based on how their decisions will affect their children. In other words, they can learn to be good parents.

How It Works

Some teens stay in TLPs for only a few weeks or months, though some stay for years. Some leave only to return in a few weeks after realizing – as their caseworkers often say – that "life with a bedtime is better than life without a bed." For residents who leave the program, an outreach program offers follow-up support services wherever they go. Again, ensuring safety is the primary concern.

The majority of the Teen Living Program's success is due to the dedicated staff members and directors of the programs. The program directors from each home meet bi-monthly to deal with issues in the population or program, troubleshoot cases, or just offer support to each other. Regular training sessions and guest speakers also keep all the programs up to date on serving teen families. Most importantly, having a network of other program directors reduces burnout in these highly stressful jobs.

Technology – especially good computer systems – has proven crucial in maintaining accurate information on residents of TLPs. Faxes, e-mail, and voicemail keep programs connected to each other and to the network coordinator at DSS headquarters.

Early evaluations of the Massachusetts Teen Living Program show promising results. A study by the Boston University School of Social Work found that after leaving Second Chance Homes, 65 percent of the teen mothers continued to participate in education or job training; 44 percent had worked at some point after leaving their Second Chance Homes; and 29 percent had left welfare.

Beyond these results, however, the increasing demand for the program offers proof of its value. When the program began in 1995, many teens were reluctant to enter the homes: They were suspicious that the state would take their children away and unhappy at the prospect of living under so many rules.

Five years later, the homes have earned the trust of many teen mothers. While the caseload of teen parents receiving welfare in Massachusetts is dropping, the number of teens seeking placement in TLPs is growing. In fact, there is a waiting list. Over half the teen parents entering TLPs are over 18 and not subject to the supervised living requirement. Why are these older teens anxious to enter Second Chance Homes? Because they have no other housing options, because they need the time a TLP can provide to get their lives together, and because word has spread that the programs are good, safe places for teens and their children.

Step Six
Getting Teen Parents in the Door

Once you've decided which families to serve and what your program will look like, you should decide how to screen teen families. You also need to design an assessment process that will help you determine which services the young families need from the moment they enter your program.

Recruiting and Screening Teen Families

The most basic question you'll have to answer is: Where will the teen families come from? Will you accept referrals only from one central point, such as the welfare agency or the child protective services agency? Or will you accept referrals from other community-based organizations, religious groups, homeless shelters, schools, hospitals, and even off the street?

Some state-run programs, like those in Massachusetts, Nevada, and the Detroit area, keep assessment and referral centralized. One state agency assesses all potential residents and determines which Second Chance Home is appropriate for each client. Nonprofit contractors who run the homes have limited influence over placements. This approach ensures that all teens are assessed and referred in a fair and professional manner, but it limits the power of contract providers to control the group dynamics of their homes. This approach may also miss teens who never cross the threshold of a welfare office.

In Massachusetts, one agency handles all screening and assessment for the 21 state-funded Second Chance Homes. It works this way: When a teen parent enters her local welfare office to apply for benefits, she is told of the requirement that she must live in an adult-supervised setting to qualify. If she states that she is unable to return home due to abuse, neglect, addiction, or "extraordinary circumstance" (as determined by the state), the welfare worker tells her about the Teen Living Program and refers her case to a trained assessor. The assessors are not state workers but private clinicians in the local community who are under contract and trained to perform these assessments as needed.

The assessor meets with the teen, visits her current living situation, talks with her parents, and then assesses her independent-living and parenting skills. The assessor decides whether the teen qualifies for the program, what her other housing options are, and whether she can handle the program's rules and structure. Through this process, the teen gets the chance to learn about the program and the expectations she will have to meet. Assessors also arrange site visits for teens to Second Chance Homes.

Finally, a state administrator reviews the completed assessment and, if warranted, refers the teen to a Second Chance Home. The administrator tries to match the teen to a home in or near her community that provides the services she needs. Usually younger teens go to group homes, while older teens may be referred to shared apartment programs.

The entire process takes about 10 days. In 1999, Massachusetts assessed 502 teens for its Teen Living Program and referred 78 percent to programs.

Many Second Chance Homes outside Massachusetts – especially private programs – opt for a decentralized system. In New Mexico, teen families find their way to Second Chance Homes from many sources – social services and public health agencies, schools, homeless shelters, and the juvenile justice system. Some have even walked into homes off the street. "We lose too many girls because they aren't able to go to the welfare office and ask for benefits and admit they can't go home," says program administrator Barbara Otto Dennis, explaining why the multiple site referral system is so important.

New Mexico's approach ensures that the Second Chance Homes system is easily accessible to teens. But homes with multiple points of referral may not enjoy the guaranteed funding stream that contracts with government agencies provide. They also may not be able to fully control the screening and assessment process.

Serving teens who come to the program with different needs may also complicate the dynamics of a program. Teens from juvenile justice referrals may need completely different support than girls from school-based referrals. Rhode Island's New Opportunity Homes faced a tough challenge when a court ordered a teen to enter, compromising the voluntary nature of services.

Tim Kemmy of the Rhode Island Department of Human Services advises programs to take the time to educate referral sources about the availability of the homes. Referring agencies need to know what the program can and can't do and how to handle various situations when teens approach these organizations for help.

The Assessment: What Should You Find Out?

The assessment process can be extremely valuable, both for programs and teens. For programs, it can help determine whether their facilities are appropriate for specific teen families, and what services families need. It also can help teens decide whether they should be living in Second Chance Homes, and what goals they need to work on while they are there.

The assessment and referral process is a crucial part of any program. Teen parents are frequently in a desperate situation at the time they are assessed, but are still reluctant to seek help. If the process isn't smooth, if teens get passed off to too many people, or if the assessors are not trained to deal with teens, chances are high that teens won't follow through and enter the program.

Sometimes just completing an assessment over the course of a few days can be a challenge. Teens often don't have telephones or won't give out their phone numbers because they fear that parents or boyfriends will find out that they want to enter a Second Chance Home. Some teens fear losing custody of their children and refuse to disclose that their living situations are dangerous. And by the time assessments are completed, many teens may have moved and can no longer be found.

Obviously, assessments aim to capture the basics about teen families, including medical history, educational attainment, and current addresses, names and family contact information. But a good assessment also paints a picture of teens' personalities and

needs. It should define their strengths and weaknesses. *(A sample assessment form, from the Massachusetts Teen Living Program, is included as Appendix II.)*

Keeping it all organized

Before homes open their doors, each home or network of homes needs systems for keeping track of placements. For both evaluation purposes and daily functioning, programs must be able to easily determine where each client is, how long she has stayed, and how much longer she is expected to stay. Creating a computerized database is most probably your best solution.

Be careful not to try to do too much on the computer, however. Massachusetts found that due to high staff turnover and social workers' lack of comfort with computer systems, it proved impractical and unreliable to have each of its 21 programs keep this data. Instead, the state hired an employee in its central office to manage all data entry.

Additional technology may be needed to keep networked programs in touch, including fax machines, email, and voicemail. To the extent these can be made available as programs open, operations will run more smoothly.

A Continuum of Care:
Rhode Island's New Opportunity Homes

Soon after the federal welfare reform law passed, welfare officials in Rhode Island realized that teen parents on welfare who could not live with their own parents faced a housing crisis. Few residential care providers were willing to take in mothers with children and the state's HUD-funded transitional-living facilities would not accept minors.

Something had to be done to prevent teen parents from losing benefits, becoming homeless, or going into foster care. The solution? The New Opportunity Homes initiative.

Christine Ferguson, the state's director of the Department of Human Services, became the driving force behind the New Opportunity Homes. Focusing on the importance of breaking the welfare cycle, she convinced the legislature to allocate $579,000 for teen parent residential services in 1997. Two and a half years later, the first home opened. Today, six New Opportunity Homes provide 15 slots for teen families. But according to Tim Kemmy of DHS, "Getting the funding was only the beginning of a long process."

The Design

A planning group, including representatives from DHS, the state child protective services agency, the state health department, and community-based organizations, worked for over a year to structure the program. The planners designed a program with three distinct characteristics: 1) an emphasis on using existing resources for teen parents, 2) the involvement of many different agencies, and 3) providing a continuum of care.

First, the state chose to rely on an existing infrastructure to coordinate the New Opportunity Homes program. The state's five Adolescent Self-Sufficiency Collaboratives (ASSCs) had been established to provide case management services that would help teen parents make the school-to-work transition, avoid repeat pregnancies, find stable living arrangements, establish paternity and child support, and enroll their children in Early Head Start.

DHS designated a non-profit agency, the Comprehensive Community Action Program, to coordinate both the ASSCs and the New Opportunity Homes, thus ensuring that homes don't pay for duplicate services. The Comprehensive Community Action Program subcontracts with other service agencies in the area for anything the collaboratives cannot provide.

For assessment and referral, DHS adopted a multidisciplinary approach, bringing together representatives from DHS, the child welfare department, and other collaborative partners to review each program applicant. State officials say that this approach ensures that each teen parent receives appropriate services – and that all providers work with her toward the same goals. Because the state does not take legal custody of teen mothers, all services are voluntary.

Finally, DHS designed a "continuum of care" program structure, providing three levels of support and responsibility for teen residents. Teens begin in a highly structured group home with 24-hour supervision. After about six months, residents move to apartments where they receive 16-hour supervision and have more responsibility for managing their own money and time. The final level, with eight-hour on-site supervision, allows residents the daily support of a case manager while they prepare to live on their own.

The Challenges

Rhode Island's TANF rules limit eligibility for the New Opportunity Homes to teen parents under 18. Stephanie McCaffery, coordinator of case management services for the ASSCs, notes that teen parents over age 18 need New Opportunity Homes at least as much as the minors. Although the state gives residents six months after their 18th birthdays to move out of the program, many teens enter the program just before they turn 18, which doesn't give them enough time to progress through the level system.

Having multiple state agencies work together on evaluating applications also has proven to be a challenge. Rhode Island officials caution that close interagency collaboration on individual cases may prove difficult for large states. Even in Rhode Island, it wasn't easy.

Kemmy suggests that states following Rhode Island's lead should convene meetings with all relevant agencies ahead of time to consider housing regulations, child protective regulations, welfare regulations, and health department regulations. "Involve everyone from the beginning including representatives from the court systems and other agencies," Kemmy advises, "so everyone is clear on who is eligible, the purpose of the program, and how the process works."

Beyond issues of collaboration, however, funding has proven the greatest challenge. The state legislature's appropriation does not cover facility acquisition and rehabilitation costs, and programs have had to scramble for additional funds. Currently, three sites use funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Supportive Housing Program, two programs are located in federally subsidized housing complexes, and one site was able to purchase its facility with a $100,000 grant from a local foundation.

Because these sites are located across the state, residents must move to graduate to the next level on the continuum of care, sometimes changing service providers in the process. "Ideally, all three levels would be available in each area," says McCaffery, but funding for that many slots is not currently available.

With the planning process complete and initial obstacles overcome, however, Rhode Island's New Opportunity Homes are hitting their stride. Kemmy offers the example of a 16-year-old with a newborn who was living with an aunt in a home that the ASSC caseworkers found inappropriate. While the young mother went to school, another relative provided child care; this caretaker failed to pass a background check performed by the ASSC worker.

Kemmy says the caseworker was able to refer the young mother to a New Opportunity Home and help her find suitable child care. "Now," she says, "this young lady and her child have safe living arrangements and good quality child care and she has returned to school. I love it when it works like this!"

Step Seven
Selecting the Services You Will Provide

In designing a Second Chance Home program, you should decide what services you are going to offer. Similarly, states and communities that are considering government-funded Second Chance Home networks should decide which services they are going to require homes to provide as part of their contracts. Obviously, these decisions will depend on several factors, including the needs of the teen families being served, the availability of funding, and the extent to which homes can coordinate with other organizations in the community to provide services.

Both government-run Second Chance Home programs and individual homes find that partnerships with other state agencies, local agencies, schools, and community-based organizations are the best way to ensure high-quality services and keep costs down. In most communities, existing organizations already have years of experience providing counseling and support services to teen families—as well as budgets that enable them to do so.

The best Second Chance Homes don't try to provide all the services that teen families need in-house. Rather, they either bring service providers into their homes to work with teen families, or they help teen families make connections with services outside the homes. The best Second Chance Homes act as case managers, brokers, and gatekeepers for teens—helping them find and access the best housing, education, job training, medical care, child care, and counseling services in their communities.

These kinds of community partnerships have enabled state-run Second Chance Home programs in Nevada and New Mexico to keep their costs low, keep their programs community-based, and provide quality services.

Services to offer in-house are the ones that will build community among teen residents, such as parenting and life-skills classes. Bringing outside providers into the home to offer services such as these lessens the burden on the staff and brings fresh faces into the home. For example, one program brings in a chef once a week to give residents cooking lessons, and another brings in representatives from a local women's organization to talk about wearing professional attire.

Services that work well when provided by outside organizations include individualized services such as counseling. In some cases, teens are reluctant to share too much personal information with in-house staff and prefer to receive counseling from outsiders.

Finally, consider closely which services will be required for teens and which will be optional. Across the board, Second Chance Home residents complain they have too many group meetings and too little time. Over-scheduling can overwhelm residents who are not used to a great deal of structure.

That being said, there is a core group of services that every Second Chance Home should either provide on site or form partnerships with other organizations, to provide:

Core Services

- **Adherence to Basic Health and Safety Standards.** At the very least, homes should meet local zoning and safety codes. Many Second Chance Home providers feel strongly that homes receiving government funding also should meet state licensing requirements for child caring institutions, or a variation of those regulations tailored to Second Chance Homes. Massachusetts, for example, adapted its regulations governing foster care group homes to address the unique needs of teen families who are not in state custody.

- **A Family Atmosphere.** Second Chance Homes shouldn't be run like institutions, with an emphasis on order at any cost. Instead, staff members and community volunteers should act more like "house parents" than case managers by providing teens with a sense of family structure and support that many lacked in their own homes. "We make them feel safe and nurtured," says Rutha Greene, who runs Tapestry Home in Atlanta. At Jean's House in Columbus, Georgia, a married couple serves as house parents.

  Fundamental to maintaining a nurturing environment is keeping each program small—no more than 10 families. Most providers also think that each teen family should have a separate bedroom.

  One mistake that many providers make, however, is assuming that house parents alone can staff Second Chance Homes and deliver all services. Most of the time, this approach results in burned-out house parents and spotty services for teen families. Jean's House and other Second Chance Homes make sure that other program staff members are available to supervise teens, provide services, and give house parents an occasional night off.

- **Rules that Reward Responsibility.** Given the lack of stability and supervision in many teen parents' lives, one of a Second Chance Home's main strengths should be its ability to instill a sense of structure and discipline in teen families. Curfews, limits on dating, required chores, and an incentives and rewards system all help teens become more responsible. Programs don't need to micromanage these issues, but they should have written rules. Written policies also help staff members and residents avoid taking punishment too personally.

  However, Donna Anderson of Hope House in Savannah emphasizes that Second Chance Homes need some flexibility, allowing teens to make mistakes, learn from them, and mature. "Let the environment be one of personal responsibility," she cautions, "rather than rules and regulations."

- **Personal Attention**. In stable, healthy families, teens receive supervision and attention when they need it. Second Chance Homes should be run by experienced, trained professionals, and staff-to-teen ratios should be high. The Supportive Housing Program at Catholic Social Services of Wayne County,

Michigan, recommends a minimum staff-to-resident ratio of two staff for every eight residents. For younger teens, domestic violence victims, and other teens with special needs, homes should provide 24-hour supervision.

By making use of community mentors and volunteers, a model program can keep costs down while integrating socially and economically isolated teens into communities with positive role models. For instance, Colorado's Bridgeway pairs every teen mother with a volunteer Big Sister from the community.

- **Culturally and Linguistically Sensitive Services.** Staff members in Second Chance Homes should be familiar with how childrearing and behavioral norms may vary among cultures. Depending on the programs' location and service population, homes may also need bilingual staff members.

- **Parenting and Life Skills Training.** Programs should offer regular parenting classes that teach teens about infant health, child development, appropriate discipline, and basic household management skills such as surviving on a budget, buying and preparing food, and "child-proofing" a home.

  Second Chance Homes also should instruct teens on how to find housing, use public transportation, and access other social services. Finally, they should prepare teens for adulthood through assertiveness training, sex education, conflict resolution training, and substance abuse prevention.

  Of the 36 Second Chance Homes that responded to the SPAN survey, all reported offering both parenting and life skills classes to residents. Most programs required teens to participate. About half of the homes relied on their own staff members to lead these classes; the rest partnered with community groups to offer classes.

  Regardless of whether your own staff or an outside agency is responsible for the classes, you should try to hold all classes in the Second Chance Home. It's the best way to ensure that teens attend, and teens may feel more comfortable practicing child rearing and housekeeping chores in their own home.

  You can choose from one of the many parenting and life skills curricula that organizations such as the Child Welfare League of America or Morning Glory Press have already designed, or create unique curricula to reflect your community's needs and norms as Massachusetts did.

- **Case Management.** Programs should either employ case managers on site or arrange with other agencies to provide case management services. Teen mothers need advocates in the system to link them to services and ensure that they receive the benefits for which they are eligible.

  In the SPAN survey, 34 out of 36 homes reported that their residents meet regularly with a social worker. The vast majority of programs—31—offer these services on site.

- **Mental Health Services**. Programs should provide or arrange access to individual and/or group mental health counseling. Becoming a mother and full-time caretaker of a child is stressful for adults; it can be overwhelming for teens.

  Many teen mothers also carry emotional and psychological scars from domestic violence, parental neglect, sexual abuse, and substance abuse. Frequently, they have been labeled as failures by schools and social workers. "There's no consistent family support for these girls," says Suzanne Milam of Jean's House in Columbus, Georgia. "They don't really know how to find emotional attachments to anyone. With the girls who come here from our maternity home, the relationship they have with me is often the longest relationship they've ever had."

  Quality counseling services can give teens a sense of control and competence in their own lives, and help them form healthy relationships with others. In the SPAN survey, 34 of 36 Second Chance Homes either provide mental health services to their residents or arrange access to counseling services.

  Programs don't need to employ full-time or even part-time counselors. Many teen mothers already are eligible for counseling from other community programs or Medicaid, and using these services whenever possible can help programs keep costs down. Indeed, 21 of the Second Chance Homes in the SPAN survey rely on outside agencies for all of their counseling needs. However, if counseling is provided by outside organizations, it is important for program staff to be included in treatment planning.

- **Access to Medical Care**. Programs should ensure that all teens and their babies enroll in Medicaid and/or the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), and programs should be responsible for making sure that teens and babies receive comprehensive medical care, including family planning services. In the SPAN survey, 32 of 36 homes report that they facilitate access to medical care for their residents. Eleven programs offer at least some medical services on site.

- **Access to Education and/or Job Training.** All Second Chance Home residents should be enrolled in school or a GED program full time. If they've already obtained diplomas or GEDs, then Second Chance Home residents should be required to attend college full time, participate in job training, or work.

  In the SPAN survey, 33 of 36 Second Chance Homes report that they ensure access to high school or GED programs. Most homes arrange to send teen residents to local high schools or community-based GED programs. Seven homes offer high school on site, and five offer GED classes on site. Homes offering educational services are usually "nested" within much larger family and youth services agencies.

Among the respondents to the SPAN survey, only one program does not provide or ensure access to job-training services.

- **Access to Child Care.** Programs should work with local welfare and family services agencies to ensure that every teen living in a Second Chance Home receives subsidized child care. Teens can't take their babies to school unless the school provides on-site child care. Nor can they participate in counseling or other supportive services without reliable child care. In the SPAN survey, 33 of 36 respondents reported providing child care or arranging for teens to receive child care in the community.

  Second Chance Homes don't need to provide child care on site, and indeed, 15 of the survey respondents don't. They point out that on-site child care can be very expensive, and many Second Chance Homes don't have enough space, amenities, or time to meet state standards for accredited child-care facilities. In addition, requiring teens to navigate the child-care voucher system, find their own child-care provider, and monitor that provider's quality trains teens for the "real world" of independent living.

  Seven homes in the survey arrange for child care both on and off site. This usually means that teens have vouchers for subsidized child care during their stay, but program staff members provide child care on evenings and weekends, and in emergencies. Be aware that providing even limited child care can make your program subject to state child-care licensing regulations, including staff ratios and facility requirements.

  Eleven homes in the survey provide child care on site, and the providers enthusiastically endorse it. "You *must* include an on-site child-care component," advises Denise Tardif of the Supportive Housing Program, run by Catholic Social Services of Wayne County, Michigan. On-site child care is the least disruptive option for the children of teen mothers, many of whom are living in the first safe, stable home they've ever known. It also is the option that makes teens most comfortable—and that gives them the flexibility they need to attend school, counseling, job training, medical appointments, and parenting/life skills training, all at the same time.

  One benefit of on-site child care is that, as residents move in and out, the child-care slots are ready and available. If child care is in community-based sites, many child-care providers cannot afford to keep slots vacant until the next teens arrive. Some programs end up with six teen parents using six different child-care agencies, which can be chaotic for program staff. On-site child care also may give teens an incentive to stay in the homes, because leaving would mean losing child care.

  Before choosing the on-site option, look closely at your state's child-care licensing requirements. Also determine whether child-care vouchers will be available when school is not in session (during the summer or school holidays) or you may have to lay off staff members.

One home, Bridgeway in Lakewood, Colorado, opened a child development center on site as a strategy for intensively promoting the healthy development of the young children in its care. Teen residents are required to work at least three hours a week at the center; this enables them to learn parenting and job skills simultaneously.

- **Access to Transportation for Teens Using Off-Site Services.** If teens cannot get to school, child-care centers, or doctors, they cannot meet program goals. In areas with good public transportation, Second Chance Homes should be required to help teens get public transit passes. In areas where no public transportation exists, Second Chance Homes should provide alternate transportation. In the SPAN survey, 32 of 36 homes reported providing or arranging access to transportation.

- **Outreach to Fathers and Families.** Second Chance Homes shouldn't ignore fathers and extended families. If fathers and extended families become involved in children's upbringing, young mothers are likely to experience less of the stress of single parenthood, and children are likely to benefit from the support of fathers, grandparents, and other relatives.

  Obviously, given the abusive and addictive histories of many teens' families, it may be impossible to incorporate fathers and families into some children's lives. But whenever it can be done, Second Chance Homes should try. Liberal visiting hours for fathers and allowing fathers and families to participate in parenting programs, meals, and support groups are ways in which Second Chance Homes can keep teens connected to their families. At least one Second Chance Home, 22 Park Avenue in Portland, Maine, allows fathers to live with young mothers and their babies.

  In the SPAN survey, 33 of 36 respondents report outreach efforts to families of teen mothers. But serving fathers evidently is harder; only 25 of the 36 programs try it. Among those that do, the results are mixed. Reports Margo Bencomo of the Teen Parent Residential Center in Silver City, New Mexico: "Most fathers are not present. Very few have anything to do with the girls. Those that are involved usually do visit but do not participate in activities."

- **Transitional Services.** If they leave Second Chance Homes with no plans for the future, teens may lapse into unstable living situations, bad parenting, and repeat pregnancies. Programs should work with teens to ensure that they will make smooth transitions to independent living.

  Homes should help departing residents find housing and secure jobs or enroll in postsecondary education or training. If the homes cannot provide these services, they should help residents find resources in the community to help with these tasks. Most important, teens should not be forced to leave programs until they have found stable living arrangements. In the SPAN survey, 32 of 36 homes report providing or arranging access to transitional services.

- **A Little Free Time.** Teenage mothers may be parents, but they're also still young people. Programs should build in a little free time during the day and work with community groups and businesses to arrange outings for residents to movies, museums, and sporting events.

A note on family planning, adoption, and abortion

You must decide—given your funding and community environment—how to best handle sexuality issues. There's no doubt that every Second Chance Home program will have to confront them.

How you deal with these issues may be determined by the philosophy or beliefs of your parent organization, particularly if it is religiously affiliated. Some programs do everything possible to ensure that teen parents use birth control, including tracking doctors' appointments, providing transportation, and making birth control available directly. Other programs leave family planning strictly to the teen parents' physicians. Similarly, some programs offer mandatory classes on abstinence and/or adoption, while others don't raise these subjects. And some homes ensure that teens have access to information about abortion, while in others, abortion is not an option they are willing or able to discuss.

In the SPAN survey, 34 of 36 programs report offering sex education and family planning services to teens—25 of them on site. When it comes to adoption counseling, 30 of 36 programs either provide it or arrange access to it, although 20 opt for adoption counseling conducted by community groups instead of program staff. Only five programs in the survey offer abortion information and counseling on site; another 18 arrange for off-site counseling, and 13 do not provide access to information about abortion.

Additional Services to Consider

Beyond the core group of services, you need to decide what other services are critical for the teen families you serve—and what you can accomplish with available funding. A few services to consider:

- **High-quality Homes.** Massachusetts requires its Second Chance Homes to provide a private bedroom for each teen and her child(ren) and plenty of space for toddlers to run around. The state also requires the homes' furniture and décor to be in good condition. This doesn't have to be expensive. At Tapestry House in Atlanta, churches and community groups each "adopted" a bedroom to decorate, and at Hope House in Savannah, Habitat for Humanity renovated an old home, which Habitat then sold to the provider for $35,000.

- **Tiers of Service.** If you have the money and the facilities, you may want to offer different types of care to teens depending on their ages, needs, and maturity levels.

  Rhode Island has set up a three-level tiered service system for its Second Chance Homes program. Younger teens and teens in need of intensive services live in

highly structured group homes, where each teen has her own room, but must keep to the same rules and schedule as all other teen families in the house. These homes have 24-hour supervision.

For older teens and teens who have made significant progress in the group home setting, the next tier of service is an apartment-style program, where they share an apartment with another teen family and assume more responsibility for daily tasks. In these settings, a resident case manager lives in an adjacent apartment and supervises teens closely.

In the final tier of service—reserved for teens who are making the transition to independent living—teens live in their own apartments or shared apartments and receive only minimal supervision, combined with case management to help them find permanent housing and prepare for the future.

The challenge with a tiered system is ensuring that teens who move to a new level don't have to switch schools, communities, and supportive services. A few Second Chance Homes, such as Visions in Massachusetts and St. Ann's in Maryland, provide both group home and apartment settings on one campus.

- **Emergency Beds.** Massachusetts pays providers to keep a few "emergency beds" vacant so that teens can enter Second Chance Homes on a moment's notice. This is particularly important in states where large numbers of teen mothers are homeless or living in unsafe, abusive situations. But it's also expensive—and at least one Massachusetts home with "e-beds" reports that they disrupt program services because teens arrive with as little as three hours notice, and sometimes leave within a matter of days after their assessments are complete and they're moved to another Second Chance Home. An alternative may be to work with a local homeless shelter to ensure beds for teen parents while they are being assessed for placement in Second Chance Homes.

- **Special Homes for Special Needs.** Programs may choose to specialize in serving specific populations, such as teens with medically needy children, teens who are domestic violence victims, and teens who have been sexually abused. In the SPAN Second Chance Homes survey, four of the 36 homes specialize in serving sexually abused youth, seven specialize in serving foster youth, and one specializes in serving teen mothers with mental health diagnoses.

  However, it's important for states and programs to be clear about what Second Chance Homes are not. They are not treatment or correctional facilities. Teens with histories of drug addiction, self-mutilating behavior, violent crime, or sexual aggression may need even more intensive services than Second Chance Homes provide. While your program may not serve these more troubled teens, you should know ahead of time what housing alternatives are available for these young women so that you can refer teens to other options if necessary.

- **Specialized Staff.** In the SPAN survey, 21 of 36 programs reported that they required at least some staff members to have advanced degrees (usually a

Masters in Social Work) or be licensed by the state. Most programs that do not *require* advanced degrees nevertheless report that at least one staff member has an advanced degree. Programs may choose to have licensed clinical social workers, psychologists, teachers, or nurses on their staffs.

But as Maria Ahlin, director of Redfield House in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, says, "We value experience as much as education." What matters most in a Second Chance Home is having a staff that is caring and experienced in serving teens.

Even licensed social workers may need more specific training on dealing with teen mothers, babies, group dynamics, and cultural issues. Massachusetts requires that all staff be trained in a curriculum specifically designed for Second Chance Homes staff.

- **Support Services for Staff.** Working at a Second Chance Home can be all-consuming and emotionally draining. In Massachusetts, the state pays for staff from all 21 state-funded Second Chance Homes to meet every other month to share information and advice, and to attend an annual training meeting. The state also pays for each home to have a networked computer so that the homes can share files and communicate via e-mail. The best role the state can play is to support the staff while the staff supports the teens.

- **Computers for Teens.** Second Chance Homes may provide teens access to computers or work with businesses and foundations to obtain donated computers. The state-funded Living and Learning Center in Baltimore gives each teen resident a computer and printer, which she may keep if she successfully completes the program.

- **Individual Development Accounts.** Many Second Chance Homes open savings accounts for teens, requiring teen mothers on TANF to save some of their monthly grant or deposit money in a savings account in lieu of paying rent. Incentives can be offered so that when a teen saves a certain amount, the money will be matched. Also, the accounts can be held by the program as security deposits for damage done to the facility.

- **Community Mentor Programs.** Mentors can both provide teens with positive parenting models and help them find mother figures who can ease the social isolation that many teen parents feel. Several teens interviewed by SPAN expressed a desire for someone "just to talk to." In the SPAN survey, 32 of 36 homes either match teens to volunteer mentors or link them to community-based mentorship programs.

  It is important to note that mentoring relationships must be characterized by continuity. Teens who are struggling with abandonment and unreliability in their personal relationships do not need mentors who drop them after only a few months.

- **"Emergency" Funds.** Second Chance Home providers could use small cash accounts to cover emergencies that teen families may experience—particularly when they first enter the program. Programs also could use these emergency funds to help teens buy appropriate clothing for job interviews or to subsidize outings or rewards for teens who are making progress.

- **Guaranteed Housing Assistance When Teens Leave.** State and local governments can choose to provide teens who successfully complete stays in Second Chance Homes with guaranteed subsidized housing or federal Section 8 vouchers. This is a great way to attract residents and provide an incentive for them to complete their service plans.

- **Follow-up Services to Program Alumnae**. Without follow-up services, Second Chance Homes risk being a one-time intervention rather than a turning point. Whenever possible, programs should offer comprehensive follow-up services to alumnae, including home visits, group counseling, parenting education, and mentoring. At a minimum, these services should be available to teens during their first year of independent living. Some providers advocate follow-up services for two years or more.

  In the SPAN survey, 29 of 36 programs provide follow-up services to teens who have left their programs. While some experts caution that serving program alumnae poses financial and logistical difficulties, programs that offer follow-up services report few problems. Indeed, they report that teens frequently contact *them* for advice and support.

  Whether or not your program foresees financial and logistical difficulties, you may want to arrange with other community organizations to provide follow-up services. The Homeless Assistance Team of Wayne County, Michigan, for instance, provides housing counseling, placement, security deposits, and six months of follow-up services to teens leaving the five homes in the county's network.

  Many programs also offer informal opportunities to follow up including an annual "homecoming day," birthday parties for graduates, and requests for former residents to come back and serve as mentors or talk with current residents. Keeping in touch with former residents also allows programs to conduct long-term evaluations.

- **Step-down Programs.** No matter how many independent living classes they attend, few residents are ready to live without any support when it comes time to leave a Second Chance Home. Often, the programs are the only support systems these young mothers have known.

  "Most people don't just graduate from high school and go off and make it on their own," notes Cindy Ellis of Charleston's Florence Crittenton Home in South Carolina. "They go away to college, which is a more independent but definitely controlled environment; they have family to return to when the going gets

tough. These girls don't have anything. Pushing them out the door after so much structure is setting them up for failure."

Some Second Chance Homes, including those in Rhode Island's state-funded network, offer step-down programs to residents. The most successful step-down programs place teen families in individual apartments and offer minimal supervision with some structure and continued access to services. Step-down programs also are vital in communities where low-income housing is limited.

- **Whatever it takes.** Some teens who come to Second Chance Homes have no family, no resources, nothing they can call their own. In cases like these, the best Second Chance Homes do whatever it takes to get them on their feet—from new wardrobes for teens and their babies, to baby showers, to donated cars and first month's car insurance so teens can drive to work. Some Second Chance Homes report that they still throw birthday parties for residents who left their programs long ago. Think of whatever you looked to your own family for as a teenager—and make that available to teen parents.

One Final Note

While all of these services are important, providers and policymakers should remember that each comes with a price, literally. Even a simple mentoring program will cost money and staff time. For every service you plan, forecast how much staff time and additional funding will be needed to maintain it.

A State Responds to Welfare Reform: The Nevada Second Chance Homes Program

Passage of the federal welfare reform law in 1996 prompted Nevada's legislature to take a closer look at the state's minor teen parents receiving welfare benefits - and how these young women would be affected by the new living arrangement rule.

Legislators understood that young teen mothers should not be living on their own, but they also knew that the state's child welfare system didn't have sufficient resources to serve these mothers and their children. So with virtually no opposition, the legislature decided to spend $120,000 of its TANF funding on residential and support services for teen parents receiving TANF who cannot live with their own families. But getting providers – and teen mothers – to sign on to the program was another matter.

The Design and the Challenges

When the Nevada State Welfare Division began recruiting providers to serve teen parents in a residential setting, Paula Hawkins of NSWD wrote and distributed two requests for proposal (RFPs) before she even received a nibble of interest from providers.

Nonprofits in Nevada were wary of the state Second Chance Homes contract for two reasons. First, the target population was limited; the state has only about 80 minor teen parents. Judging how many would want to enter a Second Chance Home was difficult, and the programs would be paid only when residents were placed in homes. And because the state initially designed its Second Chance Homes program to serve minors only, teens would be required to leave at age 18; thus the length of time clients could stay in the homes would be limited.

Second, state welfare officials decided not to take legal custody of Second Chance Home residents. Says Hawkins, the voluntary aspect of the program "changed the whole dynamic." Providers were used to working with the child welfare system, where placements are guaranteed because the state has custody of children in the system. Now, the state was asking providers to establish a program for clients who could enter and exit voluntarily.

Despite these challenges, NSWD eventually awarded contracts to two community-based programs that opened in 1999. One offered three teen mothers in Reno a group home with a live-in house parent; another provided shared apartments for eight teen mothers in Las Vegas.

Once community providers were committed to the project, Hawkins faced her next challenge: attracting teens to the homes. In the first year, NSWD placed only five teens in Second Chance Homes. Some young mothers chose to live in the homes to avoid entering the child welfare system and the risk of being separated from their children. Providers also had to cope with the challenges of a rural state; some teen mothers came from towns more than 200 miles away from the closest program, forcing them to leave behind all family and community support.

Making it Work

Hawkins intentionally left much of the program design to the providers, but she had to ensure that the state's goals for its Second Chance Homes program were fulfilled. Providers wanted structure to maintain order, but the state wanted residents to have more personal responsibility so they would be prepared to leave the programs at age 18. Differences of opinion also arose regarding family planning issues, such as whether programs should provide information about adoption or abortion.

Although providers and state workers disagreed on many issues at first, consensus emerged as they worked together to solve everyday issues. "It was vital to allow providers input into the program design," says Hawkins, because it built trust among state officials, local providers, and teen parents. Ultimately, the state administrators gave the programs broad discretion in program operation.

In the Nevada program, providers supervise the homes and ensure that residents attend parenting and life skills classes. For all other services, NSWD uses 12 already-established multidisciplinary service teams across the state. Each month, social workers assigned to Second Chance Home residents present each resident's case to a team of representatives from local schools, child welfare, mental health, vocational rehabilitation, substance abuse programs, and other local service providers. This team then plans services for each teen mother and evaluates her progress. This approach ensures that teens receive the services they need while lowering operating costs for Second Chance Homes.

As the Nevada Second Chance Homes program enters its second year, NSWD is making changes designed to draw more teens to the program. Hawkins has expanded eligibility to include pregnant teens and 18-year-old parents as long as they are in school. She also has opted for a shared apartment program model, ending the contract with the house-parent group home. Hawkins is now confident that the program's growing pains can be overcome, provided that state officials and Second Chance Homes providers continue to work together. The state has to be open to the ideas of others, she says. "Let the providers create the program."

Step Eight
Finding Allies in Your Community

Community involvement and support are crucial to every Second Chance Home's success. Close ties between communities and Second Chance Homes ensure that teen mothers—some of society's most alienated and isolated individuals—can make social connections with community volunteers, social workers, and other young mothers. Members of church groups can invite the young families into their homes for Sunday dinners. Local businesses can offer part-time and summer jobs. Through these interactions, teen mothers learn to deal with a world beyond the neighborhoods in which they grew up. In making these new connections, they expand their own life options—and those of their children.

Community involvement and support also can help Second Chance Homes keep costs down, and negate some of the "not-in-my-back-yard" opposition to group homes. They can help policymakers build a constituency for Second Chance Homes, making future appropriations easier to secure.

Community support also is important when it comes to "selling" Second Chance Homes to teen mothers. Many programs have found that when they first open their doors, they have a hard time attracting teen mothers. Teen mothers chafe at the rules and structure and, in state-run programs, worry that the state might take custody of their children. Marketing the programs to teens means making a concerted effort to change these negative perceptions and win teens' trust. Advocates and practitioners who work with teen mothers are essential to this effort.

Finally, community involvement provides vital support to program staff and residents. Katherine Chaiklin, the program director at 22 Park Avenue in Portland, Maine, counsels that community supporters can provide a "resource safety net for program emergencies."

Community Building: How to Begin

Many Second Chance Homes begin building community support networks long before they open their doors. For example, community support for the Tapestry Home near Atlanta began when Connie Cousins-Baker, a social worker in the neonatal intensive care unit of Grady Memorial Hospital, noticed that an alarming number of the unit's babies were born to homeless teen mothers.

Cousins-Baker pulled together a loosely knit advisory group of other social workers, as well as representatives of churches, schools, and community organizations. This advisory group was critical to Tapestry Home's community-building effort. Members reached out to local churches, schools, hospitals, and the child protective service agency for funding and advice. Church groups donated funds to purchase the home and assigned several churches responsibility for furnishing rooms in the house. It took 10 years, and several failed attempts, to find a large house and win over the neighbors. But Tapestry finally opened its doors in 1999.

Tapestry Home's story offers an example of how community building works: It's a slow, sometimes painful process, but it can produce strong programs. A few tips for getting started:

- **Form a community advisory group.** This group can help you plan the program, raise funds, and organize other partners. Advisory groups can be helpful not just to individual homes, but to policymakers who are developing statewide Second Chance Home networks. In Wisconsin in the summer of 2000, Suzanne Jeskewitz, a state legislator seeking to launch a statewide Second Chance Homes network, convened a working group of several top state agency officials, group home providers, and advocates to help her write the legislation.

- **Reach out to all players in the community.** Be sure that every community organization that comes into contact with a teen mother knows who you are, what you're doing, and how they can help your efforts. Make presentations to a variety of community organizations, such as schools, hospitals, health clinics, homeless shelters, religious groups, the mayor's office, and the Boys and Girls Club. Universities also can offer a wealth of expertise.

- **Partner with an established agency.** Many Second Chance Homes operate under the auspices of larger, more established agencies—such as Catholic Charities, community action agencies, or children and family services agencies. These organizations have qualified staff, expertise in starting new programs, solid reputations in their communities, and valuable fundraising connections.

- **Find business sponsors.** Just-a-Start House in Somerville, Massachusetts, has found that if you approach a business with a reasonable request, they rarely turn you down. K-Mart, for example, cannot resell returned merchandise that has been opened, so Just-a-Start persuaded the chain to donate opened linens, clothing, and other merchandise to the home.

The First Statewide Network:
New Mexico's Teen Parent Residence Program

Long before federal welfare reform required teen parents to live in supervised settings, New Mexico officials had decided that Second Chance Homes were crucial in their fight against teen pregnancy. New Mexico has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the nation: 69 out of every 1,000 teen females gives birth, compared with the national average of 51 teen births per 1,000 teen females.

In 1989, the state set a goal of cutting its teen pregnancy rate in half. To achieve that goal, state officials recognized that they needed to reduce the state's high repeat pregnancy rate. Initially, New Mexico emphasized increasing high school graduation rates as a strategy for discouraging repeat pregnancies. To help teen mothers stay in school, the state offered them various school-based services, including transportation, child care, and counseling.

But social service agencies across the state quickly realized that many teen mothers could not use these school-based services because they were homeless. Many had fled their own families' homes for fear of sexual or physical abuse. Homeless shelters would not accept them because they were minors and there were no facilities for their children. The state foster care system could not guarantee that mothers and children would be placed together.

So in 1990, New Mexico's Children, Youth and Family Department developed The Teen Parent Residence Program. The most unique aspect of New Mexico's program is the unprecedented community involvement that it requires. Officially, the state legislature allocated only $517,000 in FY2000 for the Teen Parent Residence Program. But eight communities have used that seed money to create nine residential programs serving 75 teen mothers daily.

The Design

While the state officially provides less than $20 a day per teen family, federal, state, and local organizations make up the difference. The state's nine Teen Parent Residences are governed by community advisory boards, which include representatives from local housing authorities, city and county agencies, local school systems, maternal and child health councils, churches, colleges, businesses, nonprofits, and social service agencies. These partners pool their resources to support Teen Parent Residences in their communities.

One partner acts as the lead agency, responsible for hiring staff and finding resources to keep the programs running. Program directors ensure that teen parents are linked to available community services including education, job training, health care, counseling, life skills training and nutrition education.

The Teen Parent Residences draw upon federal funding sources as well. Food stamps defray grocery costs. Child-care reimbursements come from the Child Care and Community Development Block Grant for TANF recipients. And local housing authorities use the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's HOME, Transitional Living, and Family Self-Sufficiency programs to provide housing for the local programs.

Finally, community groups support the programs financially and help them offer more home-like atmospheres. Churches hold fundraising events. Local Veterans of Foreign Wars chapters host birthday parties for the young mothers and their children. Furniture stores donate cribs and beds and dressers. And schools provide mentors and tutors.

The Challenges

Establishing and maintaining community partners can be a challenge. Building trust among different groups takes time, and partners struggle with other demands on their time and resources. In addition, partners come and go, so resources available to the programs can change from month to month.

Communities' abilities to accommodate teen parents vary greatly. The state requires only the basics: safe housing and access to comprehensive support services. Everything else depends on the strength of the program's advisory board, the availability of housing, and the number of teen parents in need in the community. Some communities offer group homes, while others offer supervised apartments. Quite often, the Teen Parent Residences are full and teen parents end up on waiting lists.

In rural areas, where the need for teen parent housing is intermittent, local housing authorities provide apartments for teen parents over 18, and counselors provide these teens with intensive case management.

Keeping the Teen Parent Residences community-based is crucial to their success, according to Barbara Otto Dennis of the New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families Department, who founded the program. "You can [create Second Chance Homes] on whatever you have," she says. "You just have to gather more partners if you have less money."

Another advantage of the community-based model is that teen mothers can find their way to the programs through many sources; they may be referred by schools, social service or public health agencies, the courts, or local hospitals. And some simply walk in off the streets.

How it Works

Teen parents are not required to be welfare recipients to live in the Teen Parent Residences. The homes are open to all young mothers under age 19, although most residents receive TANF funds. Although the program is voluntary, some teen parents chose the program to avoid having their children placed in foster care. The Teen Parent Residence Program is overseen by the New Mexico Children, Youth and Family Department, which administers the state's welfare, child protection, and juvenile justice programs; this centralized system avoids the bureaucratic complications that might otherwise occur when homes serve diverse populations.

The program has no formal time limits. Residents may stay six months or two years. Some young women who are still in school stay until they are 21 or 22. The program's goal is to prepare them for independence. Even though time limits are flexible, expectations for behavior are very clear. Residents must stay in school. If they are sexually active, they must use birth control. Residents must abide by curfews and rules about male visitors. They must complete their chores on time. "In many ways, it is just like being a part of a family," says Barbara Otto Dennis. "We don't threaten. There is just simple agreement on what a resident must do to be a part of the program."

In the first decade of operation, more than 1,000 teen mothers and their children lived in the Teen Parent Residences, with impressive results. For young mothers living in the homes, the repeat pregnancy rate is less than one percent. Teen residents are graduating from high school in large numbers. State officials have decided to add another home in 2001.

Dennis defines success in more qualitative terms as well. ' Success is a girl who walks away from the program with her baby and we know that the baby is safe because she's got the skills necessary to protect and take proper care of her child.... We're not worried about her anymore."

Step Nine
Estimating Costs

The most common piece of advice from the homes in the SPAN survey was simple: "Secure funding!" But before you begin fundraising, you need to estimate what your program will cost.

In the SPAN survey, 24 homes provided budget information. Among these homes, the average cost of serving a teen family for an entire year was approximately $41,000. This average represents all of the home's expenses—including housing, personnel, administration, and service delivery—divided by the number of teen families served at one time.

Costs at the homes in the survey ranged from a low of $5,300 per teen family per year to a high of $69,350. Faith- and community-based programs not licensed by their states generally reported lower costs. The most expensive programs in the SPAN survey served foster youth under contract to the state and were fully licensed.

Why Do Second Chance Homes Cost So Much?

While Second Chance Homes are not cheap, it's important to remember that a $41,000 average annual budget covers all costs for residential services to a teen mother *and* her baby. You may want to compare this figure to the cost of placing a teen mother and her baby in institutional foster care for one year.

It's also important to remember that under welfare reform, states are required by federal law to assist teens in locating alternative supervised living arrangements if they cannot live with their own parents. By funding Second Chance Homes, states can fully meet this federal obligation.

Some Second Chance Home providers also argue that their programs actually save money in the long run, by reducing the chances that teens will have repeat pregnancies, become long-term welfare recipients, or subject their children to abuse and neglect. However, there has been no study on the long-range impacts of Second Chance Homes on teen families, so these arguments are anecdotal.

Still, some experts argue that, rather than talking about the expense of Second Chance Homes, advocates should talk about the expense of *not* providing them. What are the alternatives for teen mothers and their babies who have no other place to go—homelessness, child abuse, lifelong welfare dependency, and increased chances that the children will grow up to be incarcerated or become teen parents themselves?

Keeping Costs Down

A program's budget depends heavily on its goals and the types of services that it provides. Second Chance Homes don't *have* to cost as much as $40,000 a year. Many programs manage on smaller budgets by keeping their costs down on the two most expensive budget items: housing and staffing.

Many homes report spending more than 60 percent of their budgets on staffing alone. How much you are able to reduce these costs depends in large part on whether or not your program is subject to licensing regulations, such as specific staffing ratios and facility sizes.

Obviously, there are ways reduce costs. For instance, programs generally find that it's cheaper to own their facility than to rent it, and many have obtained their facilities through donations or a capital campaign. Using resources and programs readily available in the community will save money and may provide better expertise than your program alone could afford. Homes run by faith-based and community-based organizations often do not have state licenses and rely heavily on donated goods and services. This practice, however, sometimes raises issues of the quality and sustainability of basic resources and services.

Some programs, especially those serving older teens, opt not to have 24-hour staffing. The staff of Portland, Maine's 22 Park Avenue found that relying on residents to take some management responsibility in the off hours was better for the program than having paid staffing 24 hours a day.

Another money-saving option is rallying volunteers. But Kathy Chaiklin of 22 Park Avenue cautions programs to be wary of the vulnerability of the young families. "These parents don't need any more people coming in and going out of their lives," she says. "Focus the volunteers on the facility, not on the clients." Chaiklin suggests that volunteers can be great for cooking meals, cleaning, home repairs, and special projects around the house. But when it comes to one-on-one work with the residents, Chaiklin advises using professionals.

Figuring Out Your Budget: Some Questions to Ask

Whether you are a state policymaker considering a state-funded Second Chance Homes network or a practitioner looking to open a home of your own, you need to determine what your overall budget should be. To project your program's budget, you should begin by pricing services in your community and then seeking potential contributors or alternatives. Wayne County, Michigan's Supportive Housing Program failed to do this. And as a result, program coordinator Kelly Rogers says that the five homes were initially overwhelmed by their clients' needs and the costs of providing services.

In developing a budget, envision your program at three or four different stages in its development. First, keep in mind that it takes a year to 18 months for a typical Second Chance Home to actually open its doors, given the time that's needed to conduct a needs assessment, raise funds, acquire and renovate a facility, hire and train staff, and design program structure and services. How much will that year cost you? If you plan to become licensed, how much will it cost for you to comply with state standards? How will you pay for start-up time? Are planning grants available from state or local government, or the private sector?

Next, imagine your program in its first year, when your learning curve will be steep and the community might not know much about your program. How will it affect your

budget if you are not operating at capacity? What will you have to spend—both in terms of resources and staff time—to get the word out about your program to teens, social services, and community organizations?

Now imagine your program at capacity, providing all of the services that you initially planned. Have you budgeted enough money to cover all of your costs? Do you have an operating reserve to cushion against downturns in demand or increases in the cost of services? Would you like to expand the scope or services of your program?

In determining costs, here are a few questions to think about:

Housing

- Do you already own a facility—such as an apartment building, a large family home, a former school, a hospital, or a convent—that can be remodeled to serve as a Second Chance Home? If you don't own a facility, do any other agencies in the community own appropriate housing? Alternatively, what will it cost to rent a facility?
- What will it cost to renovate the facility and to comply with zoning and health and safety codes? How long will this process take?

Staffing

- What are the characteristics and needs of your population? Will the group need 24-hour supervision? Can you provide 16-hour or even 8-hour supervision instead?
- How many staff members will you need to achieve the staff-client ratio that you'd like?
- Do you want a full-time administrative and a full-time service delivery staff? Or will you expect one staff to handle both sets of responsibilities?
- What qualifications will you require for staff members? Do you want some staff members to have advanced degrees? Do you want to use house parents? Will you need bilingual staff members?
- What is the going rate in your community for staff members in residential programs? How do these costs vary with the staff members' levels of experience?
- How many staff members will you need to hire in the "start-up" phase, while you're designing the program and raising funds, before the program opens its doors? How much will this minimum level of staffing cost?
- Will you pay for staff training and development? How much will this cost?
- Are there benefits that you can offer in lieu of money that would make the position attractive?
- Are there local graduate schools with which you could cooperate to get students to work at your site in exchange for clinical credit, rather than wages?

Services

- What services do you want to provide on site? How much do other residential facilities for youth in your community spend on similar services?
- What services would you prefer to contract out? How much do outside vendors charge for these services? Do you have to pay a fixed rate, or can you access these services on a fee-for-service basis?

- Which services do you think you can get other groups in your community – such as government social service agencies, nonprofits, and faith-based or community groups – to provide at no or low cost to your program? How solid are their commitments to provide these services? What will it cost you if those commitments fall through?
- Do you want your facility to be licensed? What accommodations will you have to make in housing, staffing, and services to meet state licensing requirements? How much did it cost other residential programs in your community to meet these requirements?
- What will be the costs of liability and property insurance; transportation (including lease or purchase price, gas, insurance, and maintenance); equipment such as computers, printers, and fax machines; food; and overhead costs for your parent agency?
- What will you expect residents to contribute? Some programs expect clients to pay a portion of their state benefits (up to 30 percent) to offset program expenses. If you choose to do so, be prepared to ask residents to leave when they don't pay. Also be sure that their contributions do not give them "tenant status" under local and state law, or you may have to go to court to evict residents who don't comply with other program rules.

Finding the Funding

Once you've developed a budget, you face perhaps your toughest challenge: raising the money. Fortunately, state and local governments, as well as private providers, can draw on literally dozens of federal, state, and private funding sources. A companion SPAN publication, *Second Chance Homes: Finding the Funding*, discusses potential funding sources in detail. It's available free online at www.span-online.org.

Don't forget to look to your own community for the funding. People are more likely to contribute when they know exactly how their money will be used. Remember that there are likely to be many businesses, media, and individual donors locally who aren't listed in any grant book, but who would make a donation if approached with a specific need. This method of funding also helps the community embrace the program.

The Power of One:
The Wayne County Supportive Housing Program

In May 1996, the Wayne County Family Independence Agency (FIA) – which serves the Detroit and Highland Park areas of Michigan – examined its welfare population and determined that dozens of teen mothers and children in the region might be homeless if a rule requiring minor teen parents to live at home were implemented.

Kelly Rogers, a program director in the Safe Families/Safe Children Unit, set out to establish a countywide network of Second Chance Homes. Four years later, that network offers safe havens to 57 teen mothers and their children in five residential facilities.

The Design

Rogers began by establishing a coalition of non-profit service providers: "I literally sent out invitations to come to a meeting if they were interested in applying for a grant," she says. Rogers then screened each provider for experience serving teen parents, ability to provide quality services, and financial stability.

Rogers found that agencies with housing already available – those with "site control" – were most ready to apply. "It's really a Catch 22," says Rogers, because programs need a site to apply for funding, but they need funding to rent or purchase sites while waiting for start up. Ultimately she chose eight agencies for the Teen Parent Empowerment Collaborative. While each agency would provide its own residential or day program for teen parents, the agencies submitted a common proposal to the HUD for funding under the Supportive Housing Program. In November 1996, HUD awarded the collaborative $2.8 million over three years. Rogers needed to raise a required 25 percent in matching funds, and the Michigan Board of Housing Development and the city of Detroit provided the necessary $616,000.

The federal grant pays for the costs of maintaining the facilities, staffing the programs and some services at the five programs, such as parenting and life skills classes. FIA assesses the teens at intake and provides case managers, cash benefits, and child-care vouchers.

The Challenges

While Wayne County raised the local match for its HUD grant, the five residential programs were busy rehabilitating their facilities to meet city zoning and fire codes. Several programs had to renovate their buildings, and all programs found that they needed paid staff long before they ever opened their doors to teen families. In January 1998, a year and a half after the initial need had been identified, the first doors opened – and Rogers realized that she had underestimated the program's cost. "It was extremely difficult to get the programs up and running without funding for start-up time and rehab figured in," she recalls. Partner agencies contributed money from their own budgets, donated staff time, or tried to raise money locally. Staff came and went. Deadlines passed. But finally the doors did open.

The Teen Parent Empowerment Collaborative's five sites offer a continuum of care, from structured group homes to shared apartments. While the program offers 57 beds, only five to 10 slots are available for 18- or 19-year-olds. Initially, the program had difficulty attracting 16- and 17-year-olds, while there was a waiting list for the 18- and 19-year-olds. "Sixteen-year-olds still think they can make it on their own and are very concerned about being with their boyfriends, whereas the older girls have found out it's too hard on their own," Rogers says.

The program accepts only TANF-eligible teen parents. Rogers has been surprised at how needy the young women are: "Teens are coming in with the most basic needs: food, clothing for themselves and their child, needing a safe place to sleep. They are incredibly behaviorally and emotionally troubled. Many have never had structure in their lives, so they really have to hit rock bottom before they make a commitment to try. Many of their children have attachment issues and come in malnourished."

Originally, the service providers expected that each home would need one live-in advisor or house parent to supervise the home and provide parenting and life skills education. Given that some homes serve more than 10 young mothers, however, county officials soon realized that the dual task was too much for one person to handle. Rogers says the programs need at least two staff members working at all times—and that a ratio of one staff member for every three or four young families is ideal. Rogers has spent much of the past year seeking additional funding for staffing while agencies in the collaborative paid for additional staff out of their own budgets.

How it Works

Residents in the Supportive Housing Program have a 9 p.m. curfew on weekdays. Overnight visits are allowed only with family members and after backgrounds checks are completed. The young mothers also must share responsibility for household chores. Rogers says that many young women leave quickly because they can't handle the rigid structure or because they want to go back to their boyfriends.

Two years is the maximum length of stay. When residents complete the program, FIA helps them find affordable housing and also helps pay the up-front cost of first and last month's rent. About 70 young mothers have been through the program through late 2000.

The HUD grant supporting the Wayne County Collaborative ends in 2001, and Rogers is seeking funding to keep the program going. This time, she has revised her idea of what a Second Chance Home program needs. "If I had to do it again, I'd have fewer beds and more intense programming," she says. "These girls need so much attention."

Step Ten
Evaluating Your Success

Given the amount of money that you and others are likely to invest in your program—and the high stakes for both teens and their children—it's important to develop measures to evaluate success. Without a high-quality program evaluation, you will be unable to assess whether the program is really working and how it can be improved. And without some accountability, elected officials, funders, and your community may not be willing to support your work.

A rigorous evaluation of your Second Chance Home program can do the following:

- **Help you learn more about the population you serve.** The starting point for any evaluation will be the demographic and entry-level skill data of your clients. For example, Massachusetts officials discovered that a high percentage of their population spoke Spanish as either a first or second language. As a result, they made their parenting curriculum available in Spanish.
- **Improve program services and outcomes.** Evaluation can provide data to help adjust the program to improve outcomes. For example, if an evaluation indicates high rates of high school graduation, but does not show a corresponding increase in economic self-sufficiency, you might want to re-examine your efforts in the area of job skills training.
- **Show how the program is helping teen families.** Given the high cost of residential facilities, Second Chance Homes need to show their impact on teen families, including the numbers of teens and children served and the short- and long-term effects of intensive services. If young mothers and children who live in Second Chance Homes are safe and well-cared for, the program may save the state money, but these results need to be documented.
- **Inform the efforts of Second Chance Homes nationwide.** Second Chance Home program evaluation is in its early stages. Your evaluation data can help other programs improve their work, and make your program a model for others to follow.

That's why a growing number of state-funded Second Chance Home programs are making evaluation a key component of their work. In Texas, for example, evaluators affiliated with the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services rate the program on a number of measures such as repeat pregnancies, job readiness, high school/GED completion, parenting skills, health outcomes, reduced dependence on welfare, and employment.

In Massachusetts, the state-funded Second Chance Home programs measure each teen family's progress by assessing skill levels at intake and again at discharge. Some of the variables they track include educational attainment, job placement, rate of repeat pregnancies, how well teens are able to care for their children, how well they have developed positive support systems, and what their plans are for the future.

And in Baltimore, the state-funded Living and Learning Center won a grant from the Governor's Council on Adolescent Pregnancy specifically for evaluation. The Living and Learning Center is conducting two types of evaluation: *process* evaluation, which assesses whether the program is delivering all the services it promised, and *outcome* evaluation, which assesses whether the program is having a measurable impact on teen families. The Living and Learning Center has hired an independent evaluator, who uses interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, and a parenting skills tool called the Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory, developed by Family Development Resources, Inc., to evaluate the program.

Obviously, most programs can't afford to hire outside evaluators. But every program, whether independent or part of a state-funded network, can make data collection and evaluation a priority. At a minimum, you should conduct a detailed assessment of the teens' skills when they enter your program and compare that to their skill levels when they leaves. Some of the variables to measure in your evaluations are listed below.

Process Evaluation: Some Variables to Measure

- Number of teens who apply or are referred to the program
- Time elapsed between referral and enrollment
- Reasons for not enrolling
- Number of teens who enroll
- Average length of stay in the program
- Number of teens who stay in the program longer than two months
- Reasons teens give for leaving the program
- Quality of physical environment, including whether the building is in good repair and whether the setting is inviting
- Quality of services, including parenting and life-skills classes, transportation, job training, educational services, advocacy, and follow-up services
- Length of time to it takes for teens to be linked to services including child care, schooling, and parenting education
- Nature of staff interactions with residents
- Number of staff members employed
- Level of staff training
- Rate of staff turnover

- How services listed in the program's service plan compare to services available
- Attendance rates of teens in school or job training programs

Outcomes Evaluation: Some Variables to Measure

- Amount of public assistance teens are receiving
- Teens' highest grade completed/degrees obtained
- Teens' grade point average (not relevant in GED programs)
- Teens' ability to function in an English-speaking world (if English is not their first language)
- Teens' ability to provide appropriate care for children's physical and emotional needs
- Teens' knowledge of age-appropriate activities, rules, and discipline for child
- Teens' and children's physical and emotional health
- Teens' ability to access supportive services in the community
- Teens' record of following rules and completing assigned chores in the Second Chance Home
- Teens' knowledge of how to prevent repeat pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases
- Whether guaranteed housing assistance is available when teens leave
- Rates of repeat pregnancy and teens' age when repeat pregnancies occur
- Incidence of verified cases of abuse and neglect in teen families
- Number of teens and/or teens' children placed in foster care
- Extent of fathers' involvement with children's upbringing
- Frequency of interaction with family members
- Frequency of financial support from fathers and/or families
- Stability of teens' living situations after leaving the program

Data Sources

Unless you can afford an outside evaluator, most of your data will be self-collected. The challenge is to ensure that the data is as unbiased as possible, and that collecting it doesn't place undue burdens on your staff. Below are potential sources of data that you might use in your process and program evaluations:

- **Program records.** Many homes require program staff to keep detailed data on easily quantifiable outcomes, such as school attendance records, grades, immunization records, and rates of repeat pregnancy. Homes for the Homeless in New York City, for example, has developed a database that records data on over 75 characteristics relating to teens and their children. Decide which outcomes you can measure by simply marking off an "x" or entering a number on a spreadsheet and incorporate these into the initial assessment so the data can help develop the service plan.

- **Staff observations.** Some program outcomes—such as teens' parenting skills—are difficult to quantify. In these cases, you must rely on qualitative observations from staff members who work with teen families every day. Thus, you should require staff members to make case notes on a regular basis.

  For instance, to track educational progress, staff members can track quantitative data such as the number of unexcused absences from school, overall grade point average, and retention in grade. But staff members should also keep qualitative notes on such issues as whether teens are motivated and interested in school.

- **Children's medical, school, and child-care records.** Evaluations should assess how Second Chance Homes affect the well-being of children of teenage mothers. Most schools and many child-care centers keep detailed records on children's test scores, grades, and behavior. Note that you probably will need teens' consent to use these records.

- **Focus groups.** Periodically, you should convene small groups of teens, as well as separate groups of staff and program alumnae, to discuss the program's impact on the lives of teen residents. Focus groups provide excellent in-depth qualitative information. They also are a vital way to get immediate teen feedback on the program and improve services quickly.

- **Maintaining contact with program alumnae.** Whenever possible, you should call teens who have left your program to assess how the program helped them achieve their educational, employment, and parenting goals. These calls can serve an additional purpose: linking teen families to additional support services, if needed. Remember that foster care confidentiality rules may prevent you from being able to initiate contact with former residents.

Experienced providers offer one practical piece of advice about outcome data. Most of the information must be gathered from behavior changes documented while teens are living in Second Chance Homes. After residents leave, program administrators generally keep track only of residents who take the initiative to keep in touch.

When follow up is possible, designating a staff member who can devote at least part time to these services seems to be the best way to maintain contact with former residents. Many programs also offer incentives—including gift certificates—for teens to complete regular follow-up surveys.

A Long-Term Investment in the Future: Jaime's Story

As two-year old Alyssa proudly struts around the room showing off her belly button, Jaime, her 18-year-old mother, proudly shows off a family photo. She and Alyssa's 22-year-old father have been together for four years.

Pregnant at 15, Jaime was living with her mother and her younger sister in a two-bedroom apartment in Worcester, Massachusetts. "When Alyssa was born, there was hardly room for the baby stuff," Jaime remembers. "My little sister couldn't sleep because the baby was up all night. It was really frustrating." When her welfare caseworker saw her crowded living conditions and suggested that she enter a Second Chance Home, Jaime agreed to visit the Lutheran Social Services Teen Living Program and eventually agreed to try it. That was two years ago.

Now Jaime shares a two-bedroom apartment with another teen mother and her child. She has been through the parenting and life skills curriculum twice. She has seen residents and staff members come and go. It wasn't always easy. Jaime recalls, "When I came, I felt as if I did something bad because of all the rules." But Jaime says she stayed because she knew the home was a good place for her daughter. "I just learned to deal with it," she says.

Jaime received her high school diploma and now works full time as a hairdresser. After waiting for months, she finally received a federal Section 8 housing subsidy certificate and has two months to find a place of her own. If she finds a suitable place to live, she thinks she's ready to move out. She says of her Second Chance Home, "It was here when I needed it, but now I'm ready to move on."

Conclusion

In 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed a charter establishing a home for "orphans and unprotected females" on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC, just a few blocks from the White House. That home, now known as St. Ann's, still operates today in the Maryland suburbs.

St. Ann's is not alone. More than 100 Second Chance Homes nationwide—some state-funded, some privately funded, some faith-based—provide shelter and services to teen families with nowhere else to call home. And with the advent of welfare reform, communities are paying closer attention to the plight of young mothers. The movement is likely to grow.

This guide has attempted to answer the questions that SPAN's staff members receive from policymakers, practitioners, and advocates every day. We have tried to provide useful, practical advice so that communities across the nation can establish Second Chance Homes of their own. Wherever you may be in the process of establishing a Second Chance Home, know there is a path to follow and that others have been able to change lives by doing so.

It is our hope that, within the next decade, every teen mother who cannot rely on her own family for support will be able to find a Second Chance Home in her own community to help her become a good parent and a self-sufficient adult.

Appendix I
SPAN Second Chance Homes Survey—Summer 2000 Respondents

For detailed information on these respondents, including contact information, consult the *Second Chance Homes National Directory*, available free on our web site, www.span-online.org.

22 Park Avenue
YWCA of Greater Portland, Maine, Inc.
Portland, ME

Ann Marie Home
Wilson House, Inc.
Sheboygan, WI

Booth Memorial Youth and Family Services
The Salvation Army
Anchorage, AK

Bridgeway
Lakewood, CO

Brigid's Crossing
Catholic Charities
Lowell, MA

Community Action Agency Teen Parent Program
Las Cruces, NM

Covenant House Florida
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Crittenton Centers
Peoria, IL

Crittenton Services, Inc.
Wheeling, WV

First Home
Stevens Point, WI

Florence Crittenton
Perseus House, Inc.
Erie, PA

The Florence Crittenton Agency, Inc.
Knoxville, TN

Florence Crittenton Center
Los Angeles, CA

Florence Crittenton Services, Inc.
Little Rock, AR

Hope House of Savannah, Inc.
Savannah, GA

Just a Start House
Somerville, MA

Locust Group Home
Youth Services, Inc.
Philadelphia, PA

Mother's Refuge
Independence, MO

NBA Olive Branch
St. Louis, MO

New Beginnings—A Home for Mothers
Christian Life Resources
Aurora, CO

New Options
The Shangri-La Corporation
Portland, OR

Pathway Out Program
Eastern Plains Council of Governments
Clovis, NM

Price Pregnant and Parenting Group Home
Jewish Children's Bureau
Lincolnwood, IL

Redfield House
Berkshire Center for Families and Children
Pittsfield, MA

The Ruth House
Lutheran Social Services
Brockton, MA

Seton Home
San Antonio, TX

Shiphrah Ministries
Belton, SC

Supportive Housing Program,
Catholic Social Services of Wayne County
Detroit, MI

Supportive Living Program
Greenbriar Children's Center
Savannah, GA

Tarleton Home
Knox County Government
Knoxville, TN

Teen Living Program
Serving People in Need, Inc.
Lynn, MA

Teen Living Program at Family Independence
Family Service of Greater Boston
Jamaica Plain, MA

Teen Parent Residential Center
Southwest Advocates 4 Kids
Silver City, NM

Urban League New Opportunity Home
Providence, RI

Visions Teen Parent Home
Cape Cod Human Services
South Yarmouth, MA

Voelkerding Village
Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Missouri, Inc.
Dutzow, MO

Appendix II
Sample Assessment Form

The Massachusetts Department of Social Services developed this form to assess all potential Second Chance Home residents.

NAME OF TEEN PARENT_____

Dates of Meetings with Teen:_____ **Location (whose home):** _____
_____

SECTION I TEEN PARENT FUNCTIONING AND NEEDS

Specific Concerns to Remaining at Home/Returning Home:_____
_____
_____
_____

Current Living Situation (if not at home): _____
_____

Planned Living Situation: (if differs from current): _____
_____

How long out of home (months/years)? _____
Teen has considered living with other relatives? Y/N

Educational Achievement/Functioning and Employment History:
Last grade of school completed: ____ Current school attending:_____
School Address: _____Telephone: (___) ___-____
Special Education Status? _____
Willing to return to school? Y/N Willing to obtain: GED/diploma /none (circle one)
Comments: _____
_____
Currently Employed? Y/N Past Employment? Y/N _____
Received Job Training? Y/N Describe:
_____

Household Management:
Has the teen parent successfully completed an independent living program? Y/N
If yes, name and address of program:
_____
Is teen able to demonstrate ability to manage household/financial affairs? Y/N
If yes, how? _____
Does teen currently have any outstanding bills? Y/N if yes, amount owed: $_____
Describe teen's current economic status: _____
_____
What is the teen's main source of income?_____

Child Health Care:
Special Health Needs/Medical Problems (describe if applicable): _____
_____
Name of Primary Care Provider:
_____
Address:_____Telephone: (___) ___-____
Child(ren) receives regular health care Y/N
Child(ren) immunizations are current Y/N
Verification:_____
_____

Infant/Child Caring:
Has teen attended any parenting classes? Y/N Location? _____
Duration _____ Is teen currently attending parenting classes? Y/N
Was child appropriately dressed? Y/N
Was child clean? Y/N Any visible marks? Y/N
Does child appear to be thriving? Y/N Where does the child sleep? _____
Does the child appear to be reaching developmental milestones within normal limits?
Y/N If no, describe: _____
_____
Does teen have a set eating /sleeping schedule for the child? Y/N
Is child attending day-care? Y/N If yes,
provider name: _____
address: _____
phone: ( ) _ _ _--_ _ _ _
contact person: _____
Describe the interaction between the teen and her child(ren) during the
interview:_____
Comments _____
_____
_____

Teen Health Status/Hygiene (describe): _____
_____
_____
Is teen parent using birth control? Y/N
Pregnant? Y/N *If yes,* Prenatal Care? Y/N
Does teen parent require/want family planning counseling? Y/N *(circle)*
Is teen parent practicing safe sex? Y/N

Substance Abuse History:
Alcohol use? Y/N Frequency/Amount: _____
Marijuana? Y/N Frequency/Amount: _____
Cocaine? Y/N Frequency/ Amount: _____
Other? Describe: _____

Has teen parent ever been in treatment for substance abuse? Y/N Type of treatment:

Comments:

Mental Status (describe teen's presentation/affect during the interview):

History of Mental Health Treatment/hospitalizations:

History of Domestic/Dating Violence:
Does teen report any past or present involvement in a violent relationship? Y/N
Describe:

Has teen parent ever taken out a restraining order? Y/N Is the order current? Y/N
Is the teen currently involved in a violent relationship? Y/N
If yes, what relation is the abuser to the teen?

Is the abuser related to the child? Y/N If yes, Explain
Does teen have a clear understanding of domestic violence issues, and if necessary, the ability to develop a safety plan for herself and her children? Explain

Criminal History/Involvement:
Has teen ever been arrested? Y/N if yes, date and offense:
Was teen convicted? Y/N
Is teen currently court involved? Y/N if yes, explain:

Is teen currently involved with any of the following agencies (circle all that apply):
DSS DYS DMH DMR
Reason for involvement:
Length of involvement:

What support services is teen currently receiving?

Motivation to enter a TLP?

Ability/Desire to relocate away from current community?

_____

Child(ren)'s Father:
Describe the teen's relationship with him_____
_____
How does the teen parent describe his relationship with his child? _____
_____
Describe the father's level of involvement with his child: _____
_____
Town/city where father currently resides: _____
Comments: _____
_____
_____

SECTION II HOME TO BE ASSESSED

Household Member(s) (please list additional members of the back):

Name (last, first, mi)	Sex	DOB	SOC. SEC. #	REL. TO T.P.

Who did you meet with and where? _____

Dwelling:
Describe physical space of home *and neighborhood* (including any health and safety concerns, i.e. lead paint, observed weapons/drug paraphernalia):
_____
_____
_____
Space Barriers to Teen Parent/Child Moving In (i.e. # of bedrooms, # of people residing in the home): _____
_____
_____
_____
Reason(s) for Teen Parent Moving Out or the Need to Move Out (teen's parents perception): _____
_____
_____
_____
Family/Household Receptivity to Teen Parent and Child Moving In/Remaining in Home:
_____

_____

_____

_____

Supports Available to Teen Parent in Household (i.e. baby-sitting, meal preparation, teaching, etc.): _____

_____

_____

Household Response to Concerns Raised by Teen Parent: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Teen's Ethnicity:_____Teen's Primary Language:_____

Other Collaterals Contacted/Outcome:_____

_____

_____

SECTION III RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on a review of the home of the referred parent/adult relative, the teen parent's ability to live independently, and the teen's parenting skills, it is determined that:

_____THE HOME OF THE REFERRED PARENT/ADULT RELATIVE IS AN APPROPRIATE PLACE FOT THE TEEN PARENT AND HER CHILD(REN) TO RESIDE (briefly state reason):

_____THE HOME OF THE REFERRED PARENT/ADULT RELATIVE IS NOT AN APPROPRIATE PLACE FOR THE TEEN PARENT AND HER CHILD(REN), DUE TO RISK OF:

ABUSE____ NEGLECT____ ADDICTION____ OTHER____

EXPLAIN:

During the assessment process, the teen identified an adult relative over the age of 20 with whom she and her child(ren) will reside:

Name of Relative: _____ ***Relationship to teen:*** _____
Address: _____
Phone Number: ( ) _ _ _-_ _ _ _
Date teen will move/moved in with relative: __/__/__

If the home of the parent/adult relative is <u>not</u> an appropriate place for the teen parent and her child(ren) to reside, please assess the teen parent's *need for* placement in a Teen Living Program based on the following competencies:

Competencies	Very Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Ability to properly care for child			
Ability to manage household and financial affairs; to live independently			
Commitment to completing education			
Suitability of current/planned living arrangement			

<u>COMMENTS/OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:</u>

Names/Addresses/Phone numbers of collaterals involved with teen:

Was the teen referred for other services? If Yes, explain:

Will any additional action be taken?

❑ REQUEST FOR EXTENSION
Reasoning: _____
Amount of time needed: _____

_____ _____
Caseworker Signature Date

_____ _____
Supervisor Signature Date

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We'd also like to thank the Second Chance Home residents who have given us advice and inspiration over the years, including the young women that we interviewed for this report. They have bravely shared very difficult experiences in the hope that other teens in the same situation would have a place to turn.

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She is the author of *Improving Outcomes for Mother and Child: A Review of the Massachusetts Teen Living Program* (1996), which won prizes at the Kennedy School for best master's thesis and best work in the field of poverty policy. Most recently, she was co-author (with Anthony P. Carnevale) of *A Piece of the Puzzle: How States Can Use Education to Make Work Pay for Welfare Recipients* (2000) and co-author (with Kathleen Sylvester) of *Restoring Fathers to Families and Communities: Six Steps for Policymakers* (2000).

Also in 2000, Ms. Reich wrote *Second Chance Homes: Finding the Funding* and co-authored (with Lisa M. Kelly) *A Place to Call Home: Second Chance Homes in Georgia.*

Lisa M. Kelly was instrumental in designing and administering the Massachusetts Teen Living Program, the largest state-run Second Chance Homes program in the nation. Ms. Kelly developed specifications for a network of more than 20 homes for teenage mothers on welfare, created evaluation tools, coordinated program development activities, and trained service providers. Since leaving the Massachusetts Department of Social Services in December 1999, she has continued to consult for the Teen Living Program while also serving as a consultant to other Second Chance Home programs around the nation. She currently works for the Institute of Politics at St. Anselm College in New Hampshire.

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The Social Policy Action Network develops effective social policy by transforming the findings of research and the insights of front-line practitioners into concrete action agendas for policymakers. SPAN then builds public will for these ideas with clear messages for the public and the news media.

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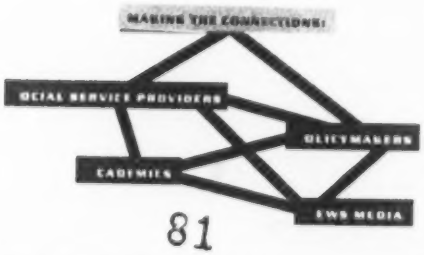

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